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IN
SAN FRANCISCO*

J. FELL

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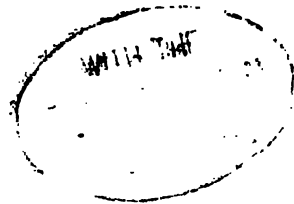
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**BRITISH MERCHANT SEAMEN
IN SAN FRANCISCO**

BRITISH
MERCHANT SEAMEN

IN

SAN FRANCISCO

1892—1898

BY

REV. JAMES FELL, M.A.

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

37 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1899

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INTRODUCTION

THE following pages have been written with the view of showing some of the causes why British seamen have been gradually drifting out of the Mercantile Marine, and seeking employment in other paths of life, in order to gain a livelihood for themselves and those dependent on them.

Their places are being taken on our ships by foreigners—men of every nation—and a strong feeling is clearly rising in Great Britain that this state of things, besides being most unsatisfactory, might, in the eventuality of a great war, constitute a national danger.

This book refers mainly to one port, San Francisco, a great rendezvous of the largest British sailing-ships. In spite of the increase of steamers, there still remain many hundreds of these sailing-ships, manned by thousands of men and boys, and it is about those long-voyage ships that these pages are written.

The facts recorded are written on the responsibility of the author alone, and refer

to what happened between the years 1892 to 1898.

Since this book was written, a Blue Book has been issued by the Foreign Office, containing reports from a number of H.M. Consuls abroad on the subject of the large number of desertions from ships in foreign ports.

A remarkable consensus of opinion may be observed, especially in distant ports, amongst these Consular reports, which goes far to prove that the cause of a very large number of these desertions may be found in the conditions under which men live and work on many vessels.

Several Consuls complain of the food supplied to the men, the small allowance of pocket-money in port, withholding liberty from men, and—on a certain number of ships—efforts made to ‘run the men out’ of those vessels.

The author can confidently recommend any readers who may think his statements are overdrawn to carefully peruse the Blue Book, and they will find much that is written in this book more than borne out by official statements from H.M. representatives in foreign ports.

JAMES FELL.

BRITISH MERCHANT SEAMEN IN SAN FRANCISCO

CHAPTER I.

SAN FRANCISCO.

FEW cities have risen to such a prominent place with the same rapidity as San Francisco. Both as regards population and commercial importance, it is pressing its position more and more upon the attention of the world. It is hard to realize that the great extent of country now covered by the city of San Francisco, with its 400,000 inhabitants, not half a century ago was merely waste ground, sand-hills and woods; or that the bay, where now so frequently are seen fleets of the largest and finest sailing-ships in the world, was of little importance to the merchants who do business on the waters of the ocean.

It is well known that what directed the attention of the outside world to California was the discovery of gold in 1849. Thousands of all nations at once turned their steps in that direction. Many came overland, and great numbers came by sea. The gold mines were not very distant from San Francisco bay. Ships bringing miners ended their long voyage in the bay, and landed their passengers there; and they, witnessing the magnificent anchorage, its extent, and its comparative nearness to the mines, naturally, as it were, settled upon its shores as the site of the future metropolis which is surely rising into existence.

No one can deny that San Francisco, considering its youth, is a marvellous city. Great brains, energy, and determination have been at work there overcoming difficulties, many of a trying nature. No one except themselves know what these early pioneers went through in founding that great city. It requires now no prophet to foretell what awaits San Francisco from a commercial point of view. The natural outlet of a state of marvellous richness—with gold, silver, and other minerals in its mountains, probably lying there at present undiscovered in great

quantities; with tens of thousands of acres of waving grain proclaiming with no uncertain sound what the great valleys can produce; whilst over vast areas, from north to south, fruits of all kinds grow and ripen in almost limitless quantities, and great tracts of country merely wait for the capitalist and irrigation to show that almost the whole State may become a vast garden, orchard or farm.

It must be evident to most persons who survey the resources and consider the climate of California, that not only will San Francisco become one of the great cities of the world, but that the State itself is destined to be one of the most coveted portions of the earth's surface—not only for business purposes, but as a health resort for delicate people, and a home for those who wish to settle down in a land which certainly savours very largely of flowers, fruit, and sunshine.

CHAPTER II.

THE BAY.

It is not, however, about California, its climate and resources, that these pages are written, but about the seamen who man the great sailing-ships which annually go from the shores of Britain and other countries to the North Pacific coast.

The great majority of these ships fly the British flag ; but this unfortunately does not signify that they are manned by British sailors, as it is now a well-known fact that British seamen are rapidly becoming a diminishing factor in the manning of these ships, and that foreigners are taking their places.

The following pages will perhaps show that the old rules and customs under which large numbers of sailing-ships have been managed are responsible to a great extent

for the present unsatisfactory state of things, and although all manner of opinions are held upon the subject, yet there can be only one opinion on certainly a number of the questions referred to in this little book.

We know what evil influences meet seamen in almost every port. As it is in other ports so it is in San Francisco. Excellent in every way as a great part of the city is, with noble churches, hospitals and other good institutions, yet as regards the sailors, that part of the city where they land presents to them a pretty solid wedge of temptation.

The long and busy wharves—extending in a somewhat broken line from Meigg's Wharf to the Sugar Refinery, a distance of some four miles—are familiar spots to the eyes of seamen who man the long-voyage sailing-ships which trade to San Francisco; for except a few mail boats and the coasting steamers, few steamers enter the bay, and the long-voyage trade is consequently done by large sailing-vessels.

Not only are the wharves well known, but equally well known is also the very dangerous condition into which certain of them are allowed to get by the wharf

authorities, whilst painfully known to some are the many holes in them, capable of receiving the leg or body of a man who walks unwarily along in the dark, treading as he fondly imagines on good solid wood. Foolish indeed are men who go down these wharves at night the worse for drink. Could the history of what has happened along the city front of San Francisco be written, it would tell of many men who have started on their homeward way never to arrive.

Not only do sailors know the wharves right well, but they know—often to their cost—the anything but healthful odours that emanate in certain places from under them; for much of the sewage of the city is discharged not right out into the bay or ocean, but underneath the wharves. Witness Third Street, Clay Street, Brannan Street wharves, where the water is blackened by the filth, and foul air at low tide offends the noses of delicate persons. Can it be a matter for wonder that ships lying for some weeks near sewage discharged in great quantities not uncommonly have cases of typhoid and malaria, and the crews, fresh from sea, too often feel not up to the mark?

If ships along or near certain wharves are obliged to lie in such places, and suffer such odours, it has even been worse for the nasal organs this past year or two for the crews of those ships which have lain at anchor in Mission Bay, which is part of the Bay of San Francisco. The authorities are filling up a large area of depressed land adjoining the bay—presumably to make it possible for the children of men whose smelling organs may not be highly developed to eventually build for themselves houses in which to dwell. The material used for filling up this area, which is now mud and water, and to lay a good foundation for the saloons which will without doubt appear on the surface when it is sufficiently hardened, is the garbage of the city, and daily scores of carts find their way to this historic spot yecept 'The Dumps' and deposit their savoury burden. Probably many thousands of San Francisco people who have been in the habit of going to Potrero and Butcher Town by the car will agree that the odours from this delightful site for villa residences may be fitly described as awful. An electric car is past in a minute, but frequently ships lie at anchor for months in Mission Bay, and then

for hours, so long as the wind blows off the shore, which it does throughout the summer, they have the benefit of this cyclone of smell. Curiously, however, unlike the sewage, it does not seem to be unhealthy, and it is devoutly to be hoped, for the sake of future dwellers on this choice piece of ground, that it will not prove to be so.

Not only are the wharves, with their peculiarities, well known to sailors, but also nearly all parts of the great Bay of San Francisco, from the odoriferous Mission Bay above mentioned to Oakland Creek, where on its foul and filthy mud, ships 'lie up' for months, and where last year (1897) for a time quite an epidemic of typhoid fever raged. Then there is the Bay of Sausalito, that favourite and sheltered spot, with its calm and delightful climate so different from Mission Bay, with its smoke, and smell, and fog, only eight miles or so away. No wonder Sausalito is the spot chosen by many captains when it is a case of 'laying up' the ship. It is a charming place. The little town up the wooded and steep hillside is picturesque, and the people are most hospitable. Ships lie well out of the strength of the tide, which goes tearing through Racoon Straits and up

the bay. Moreover, if they wish, captains can lay their ships on the mud, and, in a measure, keep their bottoms clean. It is a safe place to lie, and quite handy to get from it to the city. Few sailors, if they have to 'lie up,' regret doing so in Sausalito, with the exception, of course, of those whose captains only permit them to go on shore once every two or three months. It is the shipping 'Rotten Row' of San Francisco Bay, and lucky are the ships that get there before the number of vessels which the little bay can safely hold, is completed.

Far up the Sacramento River, thirty-five miles from San Francisco, is the Bay of Martinez. There the water is fairly fresh, which helps to clean the bottoms of ships, and prevents fresh growth and weed adhering to them—and these, if allowed to grow, knock so many knots each day off the speed of the ships on the homeward voyage. But although there is fresh water in the river at Martinez, there are mosquitos in the air, and very badly have the faces and arms of the sailors to suffer for the sake of the bottoms of the ships. Mosquitos are very unpleasant insects to have to deal with, and it seems to cause them intense pleasure—judging from appear-

ances—when they come across some young healthy-looking sailor, as large numbers at once rush to the feast, and will not be denied.

Things often go heavily with the sailors laid up for months at Martinez. It is a long way to the city, and takes time and money ; and although there is squirrel, rabbit, and duck shooting all winter, not many can get it, and other amusements are hard to find. It is weary work having to remain by a ship for months within a hundred yards of the shore, doing ship's work all the time. Every now and then some captain or officer gets up a cricket or football club, which keeps things going for a time ; but, take it all in all, sailors get pretty weary of 'lying up' in Martinez. However, there they are very often, and there—often for months, sometimes a year, and under exceptional circumstances for two years—they have to remain.

CHAPTER III.

DISCONTENT.

How often do we hear it said that seamen are a most discontented class of men, and whatever you do for their welfare does not remove one jot or tittle of their discontent, and that they will grumble at the best of food, and the fairest and most just treatment! In point of fact, we are told nothing can in any way help to remove their discontent, and that so long as there remains a sailor, there will accompany him a growl.

Two questions on the subject may fairly be asked. Has the average seaman any solid ground for discontent? and are seamen the only men who possess the faculty for growling? Regarding the second proposition, do we, it may well be asked, observe all other men except seamen walking through life with

the smile of happy contentment ever resting on their features? Do merchants, ship-owners, tradesmen of all kinds never growl? Do *they* possess the happy secret? We trow not. Wheat rises and falls, and so do freights. Trade is good one year, and bad the next. If we could cast a glance at all the different professions and trades in an instant of time, how many, either of employers or employed, should we find with an air of deep content about them? Is not the same spirit of discontent easily observable in numbers of young aristocrats and swells who dawdle round clubs and go to race-meetings, and perpetual dinners and entertainments? Yes, sailors may growl; but aristocracy joins them, if not always outwardly, at least inwardly, and it is often a perpetual and long-winded growl about most trivial matters, sighing unconsciously for something which, with money and splendid dinners, high-born companions and luxurious surroundings, they cannot grasp any more than the sailors.

Discontent is a universal complaint, in many cases caused by the uncertainties of business, in many by worthless trifles; but also, if not actually caused, it is in many cases deeply accentuated, by causes unjust

and intolerable, which should and ought to be removed. There is also discontent in the highest and most spiritual minds; but it is a noble discontent, and not about trifles.

Mankind is discontented, not only sailors; and though we cannot remove the tendency to discontent, which is, of course, in the evil which comes with every man into the world, side by side with the good, this we can do: we must recollect that mankind is tending upwards, and that progressive movement which is eternally going on means the gradual casting off and purging from man of evil, and its consequences; and though this may take ages to accomplish, yet it will surely be done. It is our duty, then, remembering that all men have the seeds of evil and discontent within them, to see to it that no unjust or unfair treatment—customs or laws—shall increase or add to our natural discontent, but on the other hand, by fair and just treatment, by humane and liberal laws, to raise mankind, if only in an infinitesimally small degree, one step nearer contentment and peace.

Whatever may be the cause of discontent among other men, we are not concerned with in this little book, but we do wish to

show that seamen, and especially long-voyage men, have as a body to put up with practically *everything* that goes to accentuate, and little indeed to relieve, the evil which is inherent in every man's nature.

We will agree that sailors, at any rate on a great many deep-water sailing-ships, are discontented, and can growl as heartily as anybody else. We will even go so far as to admit that sailors on many of the ships are even more discontented than other men, and where the discontent and growls of other classes may be heard for a few minutes, or an hour or so a day, yet very often the growls of sailors will resound pretty continuously through a voyage of several months. Yet, although this element of discontent, for the existence of which there are in too many instances good reasons, is so largely developed amongst merchant seamen, there is, on the other hand, probably no class of men who can laugh more heartily and with a more genuine ring, showing that under the outer garment of so-called discontent there lie many good and manly hearts.

The question may then be fairly asked, Is there any *real* ground for this discontent and perpetual dissatisfaction amongst seamen,

or is it only the outpourings of a poor and unhappy kind of nature?

It can be shown that not only is there ground for it, but that probably no class of men in this world have such deep cause for complaint as the men and boys who man the sailing-ships of Great Britain. It can also be shown that, with a few alterations, entailing little trouble and trifling expense, the present causes of discontent could be largely removed.

It must be borne in mind that glorious or ignoble traditions have much to do with the *esprit de corps* of men and nations. The British Navy has a long past of glorious deeds to nerve it for future trials and responsibilities. The history of its past gives a moral strength and fibre to every officer, man and boy in it, whilst the improved conditions under which the men now live and receive their pay has made it the most popular service in England. As a glorious past causes the present generation to thrill with the desire to repeat and add to the deeds of their ancestors, so the evil traditions connected with the merchant service—which are by no means ancient history—still have their influence on the minds of merchant

seamen. It is not many years ago since numbers of ships, leaky, overloaded, and not a few of them meant to sink—as Mr. Plimsoll stated—were sent to sea, which would probably have been the case still if he, for the simple sake of humanity, had not succeeded, against much opposition, in getting the load-line marked on every British ship. It is not many years since food of the cheapest sort, often really unfit for human consumption, was given to the sailors to eat. Visions of maggoty biscuits and stinking pork, of coloured water for coffee, which is still too frequently seen, of the barest of 'bare whack,' of horrible fore-castles with the vilest ventilation and least possible light, of frequent use of belaying-pins and rope-ends, still pass before the minds of the merchant sailor. They form much of the tradition upon which he has to feed, and do not, of course, act upon his character in the same way that the traditions of the navy do upon its men.

True, many of these things have been removed by a more enlightened age, and by the humanizing and moderating influences of the Board of Trade—although much more might yet be done in the way of improvement.

Forecastles on the whole are much better than they used to be. Belaying-pins and rope-ends are practically things of the past. Odd cases of brutality no doubt occur, but as a whole, brutality and violence are certainly not much in evidence on British merchant ships.

Allowing that in certain directions improvements have been made, we must still point out that most insidious means, not involving violence, are used to make a sailor's life still abominable, cause him to lose his self-respect, and become reckless and callous. So long as certain rules and customs prevail in the merchant service, most surely will the British sailor be a disappearing quantity, and the foreigner take his place.

Exceptions prove the rule, and although there are a number of ships which almost seem to be pervaded by the peaceful atmosphere of a good home, yet, unfortunately, such ships are in the minority.

CHAPTER IV.

FOOD.

ONE of the most general causes of complaint is still the food, and there can be no doubt there is every ground for it. We are told by many that you can never satisfy sailors in the matter of food, that however well they are fed they will complain, and one or two old stories are given in support of this contention. If sailors can never be satisfied with regard to the quality and quantity of food given to them, how is it that men in the forecastles of the first-class liners do not complain of the food? How comes it that men in American ships, if they do not always happen to get good treatment, yet nearly always admit that they are well and properly fed? Why don't the sailors on the English coast complain? How is it that on certain British ships, although very few in

proportion, coming to San Francisco, the sailors willingly say they are well fed and have nothing to complain about? These things are hard to answer, and the plain truth of the matter is that when sailors are properly fed they do *not* complain, and are as willing to acknowledge it as any other men; but that on the majority of sailing-ships the crews are miserably fed, both in quantity and variety—half starved as they often tell you they truly are. The writer has frequently heard both men and apprentices describe the food given to them on a long voyage as ‘cruel.’ When we hear literally thousands of men and boys complain, many in most bitter terms, about their food, when captains will state, as a number *have* stated, that the majority of sailors *have* just cause for complaint, that very large numbers are wretchedly fed, and that what is called the ‘bare whack,’ when rigidly adhered to, is barely sufficient to keep body and soul together, surely then there must be ground for the prevailing discontent on the question of food.

We hear statements made by high people about the ‘improved scale’ and ‘inspection of food’ placed on ships, and the enormous

quantity and variety which is put on board for the sailors' use, and many persons are disposed to think it is all talk on the part of the sailor. The proof of the pudding, however, is in the eating; only unfortunately under the present régime it will be impossible to ask our critical friends to put it to this particular test, as there is, practically speaking, no pudding to eat. For months together on many a ship no vision of any pudding is ever seen by the eyes of either apprentice or sailor, unless indeed it is one hurried glance, and a still more hurried and unsatisfying sniff, as the steward rushes past bearing in his arms the pudding for the consumption of those who dwell aft.

So welcome in many cases is the sight of a pudding that the writer, having dinner in the cabin of a large four-master one Sunday, heard three ringing cheers come from the sailors in the forecastle. The cause of their enthusiasm proved to be that the previous day they had rendered some slight assistance to some landspeople who were in difficulties with a boat, and these people had sent them off a present of a plum-pudding. So great was the pleasure excited by its appearance in the forecastle that it was greeted with loud

cheers. It was the first pudding of any sort or kind they had seen for nine months.

When people speak of the improved Federation scale we must recollect that not by any means do all ships have it in its entirety. We must also remember that this improved scale is *optional* and not law. Until it is made law and strictly enforced, there will be a number of shipowners who will be content to supply their ships only with the old scale of the Board of Trade, commonly called the 'bare whack,' which will insure the discontent and misery of every man and boy on those particular ships.

CHAPTER V.

SHIPS' TAILORS.

It should be borne in mind by the reader, who may not perhaps be conversant with the conditions under which seamen work, that when a ship 'signs on' a crew in Great Britain or elsewhere, they agree to take the ship to her outward port or ports, and to be paid off *when they reach home* or at the expiration of three years if the ship is away from home so long. The crew cannot by law touch, for their own use or pleasure, or even send to needy relations at home, any of their wages earned or due to them on their arrival at a foreign port, before the expiration of the time stated, except at the goodwill of the captain or owners of the ship. This system of withholding wages, even as regards a fair allowance of pocket-money to men—however respectable they may be—in port, besides

being exasperating, leaves the sailor in a position to be imposed upon and bribed by many unprincipled persons in many ports in the world.

One of the impositions commonly practised upon sailors in foreign ports is in the matter of purchasing any clothes or necessary things they may want for the voyage home to replace those which have worn out. Not being paid off in these distant ports, they have to get what clothes they may want for the next voyage from a tailor who is *selected for them*. The selection of a tailor is a very important matter, because the majority of long-voyage ships have no choice as to where they will go, or from whom they will buy their clothes. They have to go to a place selected for them, or else do without the things they want.

Are clerks employed in banks, men in great engineering works, ship-building yards, shops, stores, etc., forced to go and purchase their clothing from tailors selected for them by their manager, and to whom they will have to pay a quarter and sometimes half as much again as they ought rightfully to give? Of course not; they can go to any clothing store they choose. What would happen if the

working-men of England could be forced to buy their clothes in places where they were sure to be swindled, or else have to do without them? We know well that such a condition of things would not last long in England. If, then, other classes of working-men can choose any tailor they wish from whom to buy clothes, why cannot sailors have the option at any rate of refusing to deal with a man selected for the ship, knowing him to be unprincipled, who charges the sailor not only full price for every article, but nearly half as much again in order that he may pay commission to various friends not in the business?

Surely in common justice the sailor should have the option of refusing to deal with such men, and of claiming that an honest man be got who pays no commission, and from whom they can purchase clothing at the same rates as their brother working-men on shore.

Again, why should seamen and apprentices be forced in San Francisco to purchase clothing in the stores near the low end of Kearny Street, and in the neighbourhood where the lowest dives and roughest population are to be found, and within a stone's throw of the most immoral streets in the city? Why, instead of this, cannot they go

to some of the better places in more respectable localities, where for a less and a fair price they can purchase what they require?

Every now and then we hear some people say: 'Sailors should not want to buy any clothes in places like San Francisco, Calcutta, etc. They ought to supply themselves with enough clothes for the round trip when they leave home. I always do, and I never have to trouble any of these sailors' robbers. Sailors should be like me,' etc. We often hear talk of this kind, and it is more or less nonsense. In the first place, sailors might fit themselves out for a year's voyage, and it might easily be prolonged to two years and perhaps three years, although at its commencement it was confidently predicted that it would not last more than a year. One year's sea-clothes will not last two and three years, and consequently they are bound to get more clothes in some distant port. Then in the ordinary wear and tear of a long voyage, sea-boots, oilskins and various other things often wear out when they were not expected to do so; and under the present conditions in which seamen are shipped and 'cared for' when on shore, for many a long year to come will sailors, and a good many of

them, come to sea with none too much clothing, and some with far too little. It may therefore be easily shown that not only is a person to supply seamen with necessary clothes in distant ports a necessity, but that this business of supplying clothes to crews of ships is no trifling matter, but amounts in the aggregate to very large transactions.

Seamen on long-voyage ships are regarded by most tailors, in addition to boarding-masters, crimps, etc., as people who were born expressly into this world to be fleeced and robbed. In the estimation of these men, the one aim and object of the birth of a sailor into the world is solely that he may grow up, go to sea, work and slave, and when he receives his wages, allow himself to be robbed in order that his 'friends' on shore may have an easy and comfortable livelihood.

When in years gone by it became a transparent fact—little as some people may believe it—that sailors actually wanted clothes like other people (although there are those who think that they ought to be more than content with the clothes they can purchase out of the 'slop-chest,' sometimes at very immoderate prices), and because they had the 'audacity' very often to wish to go

to a tailor who does not charge five shillings and six shillings for a four-shilling article, they are again declared to be a class of men who are never satisfied !

When the fact was established beyond all doubt that sailors wanted clothes in distant ports, that part of the tailor profession who do not as a rule supply the aristocracy saw their opportunity, and knowing how helpless seamen were in the matter, put their heads together, and concocted the following little scheme, which would ensure them the custom of the ships—which arrangement prevails on a great number of sailing-ships, although there are numbers of captains who will have nothing to do with these men, and see that their crews get fair and honourable treatment. All honour to them.

On the arrival of every vessel in San Francisco, a uniform advertisement is published in certain of the daily papers, reading as follows : ' Neither the captain nor the undersigned consignees of the above-named vessel will be responsible for any debts that may be contracted by the crew.' This notice probably is legally necessary, but none the less does it aid the abuses which are indicated as having grown up under existing conditions.

As the crews of these ships are not paid off till the end of the voyage, or at the end of three years—if the ship is out so long—they cannot legally touch any of their wages until they finally are paid off, when the various bills they have contracted during the voyage are deducted, and they are given the balance as previously stated. They cannot touch any of their money in a foreign port, except at the goodwill of the captain and owners. They cannot run up a bill except at places arranged for them by the captain. If they choose their own shops and make purchases unauthorized by the captain, the bills will not be paid.

Then arose the tailor's opportunity. The sailor's need, necessity, and helplessness in the matter proved a blessing for the tailors. Several of these gentry, whose places of business are near the 'aristocratic' regions of Barbary Coast in San Francisco, saw the sailors' dilemma, and sprang to the rescue. The sailors wanted clothes. At all costs these wanderers over the trackless ocean must be supplied. Then these 'philanthropic' tailors, moved with pity for the sad plight of the sailor wanting clothes, and though earning wages, yet unable to draw or touch them,

went to the captain of the ship, and said : ' Your men want clothes, captain ; let us have the supplying of them, and they can run up a bill, and you shall pay it to us before the ship sails.' With eloquence and ' pathos ' they urged their plea on behalf of the sailors, and finally one of them was selected to supply the crew with the things they might require, and the men were duly informed of the fact.

It was not mentioned to the sailors that in addition to paying full price for their clothes, they would also be charged a little extra sum in order that various friends of the tailors might receive their share in the profits, and so the sailor, instead of paying four shillings for his suit of dungarees, was charged five shillings and six shillings, and everything else in proportion ; and by degrees it came to pass that it was the *custom* to pay commission, and put it down in the sailor's bill for clothing supplied ; and the whole business of supplying the sailor with clothes passed into the hands of those, not only in San Francisco, but other ports as well, who vie with one another in ' getting ships,' and giving drinks, etc. Some stores in San Francisco are more just and respectable than

others—one especially so. They keep a price-list. Others price their goods on the spot, as landspeople, as well as sailors, might come in, and if they had to pay the extras the sailors are forced to pay, they would not be likely to come again. If there *was* a price-list of the charges made to sailors, no landspeople would ever come, so it is thought better for 'business' in some stores to have no price-list, but price the article accordingly as a sailor or a landsman comes in, for the one has to pay commission for the 'privilege' of being allowed to buy clothes, and the other has not!

One of these tailors, in case the sailors have not run up big enough bills in clothes, and if they have much wages due them, knows that there are sailors on some ships who have no great objection to something stronger than water, and in playing on this weakness sees a further opportunity to enlarge his fortune.

At Porta Costa, some thirty miles from San Francisco, where ships load cargoes of grain, sailors, as a rule being allowed no pocket-money at all, can purchase nothing except at the goodwill of others.

One of these tradesmen, in his consuming

wish, not only that he might be of some little use in clothing the outward frame of sailors during the few short years that life is allotted them in this mysterious world, but also assist their thorny and often hard path through life in any way he could, saw with sorrow this great omission in the *internal* welfare of seamen at Porta Costa.

'These men,' he said in righteous indignation to his runner, 'have no money given them wherewith to buy beer. Poor fellows, think of their hardship and toil on the mighty deep! Think of the cold they suffer, which I have done so much to obviate for the voyage home, by supplying them with clothing at such moderate cost, only charging from 20 to 30 per cent. in addition to the usual price of the clothing, to insure my "friends" getting their proper share of the profits, and no right-minded sailor could ever have any objection to that! But shall my kindness stop with clothing the outward man? Most unhesitatingly do I say "No." If no one else will do so, *I* shall see to the comfort of their internal arrangements. At any rate, when they are at Porta Costa, they shall have beer—good steam beer—large "schooners" for the inward man.

I have—after putting myself to very great trouble, though I do it willingly, so great is my affection for the sailor—succeeded in arranging with the —— Saloon at —— to let them drink as much as they please up to a certain amount, as, having no cash, the poor fellows can't pay anything, but I will just put it down in their bill for clothing supplied. People may find fault with me if they choose, but I am determined as long as life lasts to try and look after the "true" interests of sailor-men.'

Thus this gentleman extorts money from the sailors—first, by obtaining the exclusive custom of the ship, and having done so, charging abnormal prices ; and secondly, by arranging with a saloon to play on the passions of sailors not of a sober temperament, by letting them have their fill of drink, and putting it down in his bill *as clothing*. It is easy to see that any amount can be put down in a bill for drinks, as seamen, if they happen to have had too much, can never determine how many glasses they had, or did not have ; but gentry with the tendency of our tailor in compiling his bill are always able with ease to settle that question.

The question of giving pocket-money in reasonable sums to seamen in port will be referred to later, but it is well to mention, when we are on the tailor subject, that the miserable allowance of pocket-money usually given in port drives men to try and borrow money. Where are they to get it? The tailor again looms up to the front.

‘I am a godsend to these poor men,’ says he to his runner. ‘They cannot do without me. I am indispensable. Not only have I to clothe them whilst in San Francisco, and satisfy their thirst at Porta Costa, but they actually wish me to give them money as well. How they trust me! Of course I cannot, however much I would wish to do so, actually *give* them money; but I will let them have one dollar or so whenever they want it, and only charge 50 per cent. commission. They will appreciate that, I know; and if they don’t realize my generosity now, they will some day, and perhaps put some flowers on my grave to show they have not forgotten me.’

When a class of men like seamen—who, whatever their failings may be, are in no way worse than other men—are hedged in like a lot of schoolboys, and are forced, from

the want of power to get an alternative, to buy necessary clothes at an outrageous figure, which no one living on shore would dream of paying, how can anyone be surprised at sailors being discontented if the enormous injustice of this trade is grasped? No man, if he is a man at all, would quietly allow himself to be robbed; but when men are forced thus to submit or else do without necessary clothes, can people be surprised that there is widespread discontent on this score alone? which discontent will remain, and by every law of right should remain, and increase until the whole system is altered.

This system has for many years been the custom, not only in San Francisco, but other distant ports as well. Why should it not be altered? Why should not seamen receive as fair treatment as other working-men? Why should they not have a voice in the selection of the tailor for the ship? Some hold strongly the opinion, and it is a good one, that the captain should still have the selection of the tailor for the ship, but that the men should have the option of refusing the captain's choice and asking him to get another man, and so on until an honest man was obtained. The tailors who supply

clothing in distant ports are well known to all deep-water sailors, and if they had the option of choice, they would at any rate arrange to go to a man well knowing whether he was honest or dishonest, and whether they would be charged justly or unjustly for what they purchased.

It is sometimes asserted that the reason seamen have to pay so largely for clothes in ports is that they might, after making purchases, desert the ship with their effects and leave the tailor unpaid. As a matter of fact, however, a sailor is not often allowed to purchase things from a tailor unless he has some wages earned, so that if he does desert he leaves his pay behind, and his bills can easily be paid out of that. It is easy to endeavour to smooth unrighteous actions over, but in this case it won't do, as it is simple injustice.

It is sometimes said of a tailor: 'He only gives 5 per cent. or 10 per cent. commission.' Quite so, but what right has any person, who is in no way connected with the business, to receive a cent of commission from the money which these poorly-paid sailors give for their clothes?

CHAPTER VI.

TAILORS AND POCKET-MONEY.

UNDER the present condition of things, and especially with reference to the wretched allowance of pocket-money to seamen in port, if seamen *had* any choice as to what tailors they would employ, large numbers of them would go straight to the most unprincipled of them, not because they like being robbed, but simply because they could borrow pocket-money, though at a large percentage, which they cannot do from honest tailors. Therefore intimately bound up with the tailor question is that relating to the allowance of pocket-money whilst in port. It may be stated, and can easily be proved to at any rate unbiassed persons, that no greater curse attends the life of a sailor on long-voyage sailing-ships than the withholding all his wages from him. Besides exasperating him,

it drives him right into the hands of boarding-masters, crimps, tailors and every dishonest person in the place who are eager to use him for their own interests.

The voyage to San Francisco is a very long one, either round Cape Horn or from Australia, four to six months usually in the one case, and two to three in the other. If we can follow in mind the path of a ship leaving England, with her mixed crew of men, her half-dozen or so of apprentices, petty officers and officers, some twenty-five to forty hands all told, we can more fully realize what pocket-money means to them in San Francisco. Leaving the temperate climes of England, in three or four weeks they are in the intense heat of the equator, then on into the temperate clime again, and in another four weeks or so are in the gales, ice, snow, and mountainous seas off the Horn. Cape Horn may be rounded in a sea like the proverbial duck-pond, but as a rule beating out round the Horn is terrible work.

Not unfrequently ships are kept there several weeks vainly trying to get round the Cape against continual gales, heavy seas and in winter terrible cold, often with the sails half frozen and the rigging and decks coated

with ice. Without doubt many a man and boy then learns what suffering means, and many a thought wings its way to a comfortable home far away in old England—its peace, quietness, and security—whilst here is the great ship storming and crashing into the waste of waters off Cape Horn and the water swishing along the decks. Hard it is—yes, harder than anyone knows—when soaked and half frozen with cold, after struggling perhaps for an hour or more out on yardarms with bellying and icy sails, with the ship rolling and plunging beneath, to come down from aloft, and have a hard biscuit to eat and some coloured hot water to drink for coffee!

After rounding the Horn and sailing for three weeks or so, the equator is again reached, and in two or three weeks the ship enters the great Bay of San Francisco. This voyage is not often accomplished under four months, usually four to six months. It is hard for us who live on shore to realize what this means to young high-spirited men and boys, of whom there are always a very large number. They have been cooped up on the narrow limits of a ship's deck for a period of time extending from four to six months.

They have never touched at a port or set foot on dry land. They have perhaps seldom even sighted the shore. Nothing but a dreary monotony of sea and sky day after day, week after week, month after month; the same food, the same companions, whether their company is agreeable or not.

On shore when we do not hit it off well with people, it is a very simple matter to seek and find fresh companions, but on these long voyages it is different. Ship-mates may be intolerable to one another; they cannot perhaps get on at all in the social sense, but whether they wish to part from one another and find fresh companions, it matters not. The fact remains that from four to six months they *cannot* get further away from those they may wish to avoid than the length and breadth of the ship allow.

In these long months there is little to relieve its dull monotony, no cricket, except such as some ships play on deck, no football, no theatres, none of the social advantages which make life on shore so pleasant. Cut off completely from *all* knowledge of the outside world, no newspapers or letters, no

knowledge whatever of how parents and wives and families at home are faring all this long time, some of whom may have been left ill or dying when the call came for the sailor to join his ship, and he had to do so or lose his means of livelihood. With what intense anxiety does many a sailor open his letters when he reaches port, to learn whether the fears or hopes which have been daily before him on the long voyage are realized. We may look at it how we will, but a voyage to San Francisco under the best conditions, from its length and deadly monotony, cannot fail to be a great trial to numbers of men and boys, as well as to many officers, although as regards food and accommodation these latter stand in a very much better position than apprentices and seamen.

It is not difficult to imagine what must be the feelings of those on board these long-voyage ships as they gradually approach port, and the well-known entrance to San Francisco Bay, called the 'Golden Gate,' becomes visible. If the wind is fair ships often sail in through the narrow entrance, and very stately they look as they glide slowly and steadily into the calm waters of the bay, and there drop anchor. If the wind is not fair, or there

happens to be a calm, the ship is picked up by a tug, and towed to her anchorage. There she lies, as steady as a rock, after months of rolling and pitching on the ocean. From her decks, half a mile to a mile away, the sailors see the long line of wharves, whilst running right down to them, and extending in every direction for several miles, is the city of San Francisco. One thought consumes them—the intense desire for change from ship-life for a time ; a great longing to set foot on shore, for amusement, for some real good meals, and for a taste of all those things which help to make life tolerable and enjoyable to those who live on shore. They gaze from the ship to the city, and picture to themselves the delightful change it will be. How little has many a sailor and many an apprentice thought at the time that the city would be their ruin ! Their one desire, come what may, is to reach it, and taste of its pleasures and amusements, and, what is very important to a sailor on a ‘hard’ ship, of its food.

If any man in the world should have a natural desire to touch a fair proportion of the wages they have earned, it is seamen after a four to six months’ voyage. What is

the city to them if they have not some money in their pockets? It is merely a network of streets. The good theatres and places of amusement are closed to them because they charge moderate sums for admittance. The only places available for them to enter are the free music halls and dives, and if they have a few cents, a 10-cent music hall. What these are, and what they mean to many who go there, it is not necessary to dilate upon. They are hells, where the whole atmosphere is pervaded by a sense of immorality and profligacy that draw many a respectable and manly young fellow into their miserable net.

It must be perfectly clear to everybody that to get a proper change after being cooped up so long at sea is, or should be, a necessity. It is also very clear that such change, in the shape of good amusements, food, etc., cannot be obtained without reasonable pocket-money, and that if any men are entitled to it by every law of right and nature, they are seamen on long-voyage sailing-ships.

The intense desire of the sailors on these ships for change such as has been described receives a check the moment almost the ship comes alongside the wharf to discharge her

cargo. They cannot get the amount of pocket-money they would like to have. They have no right to touch a cent of it, although they may have from £5 to £40 due to them in wages earned. They signed articles to the effect that they would receive their wages when they got home, and unless the captain and owners choose of their own goodwill to allow them a little pocket-money, they cannot legally have any.

The great majority of ships in San Francisco give the men 1 dollar a week in pocket-money, barely the pay of a little message-boy in the streets. A very few ships give 2 dollars to 4 dollars a week, and there are a certain number which give the men not a cent of pocket-money, however long they may have been at sea. When no pocket-money is given, it is a sign that the interesting method of procedure entitled 'running men out of the ship' has commenced.

The ship may be alongside the wharf discharging or loading from a week to three months, and there are seven evenings to be put in somewhere each week after work is done, by 5 or 6 p.m. What are men and boys to do for these seven evenings? The majority of them are not acquainted with

anyone in the city ; some few, proportionately speaking, have friends, but for the great majority there is no house or home with which they are acquainted. It is not to be expected that they are going to stay on board the ship all the evening, which has very likely everything inside and out filthy with coal-dust ; and whether coal-dust or loose cement is flying about, ships' fo'c's'les and half-decks, along the wharves, are not precisely the places that seamen would choose to spend an enjoyable evening after a hard day's work.

How far does 1 dollar a week go towards rendering their week-evenings pleasant and attractive ? A visit to a good theatre on Saturday and a meal on shore, a trip to the Golden Gate Park on Sunday and a meal, some tobacco, and a few odd glasses of beer, and the week's pocket-money is gone in two days. Little wonder that sailors go to cheap places of so-called amusement ; they have not the means to go elsewhere.

Not infrequently, if two or three men out of a whole crew get drunk, the slender 1 dollar a week is stopped, not only to those who were intoxicated, but to *all* hands. Why should a whole crew be punished when only two or three of them are guilty ? It is right,

indeed, to punish those who abused the dollar, and perhaps created a little disturbance; but to punish the whole crew is simply an act of injustice.

So long as men have not a fair amount of their wages given them in port, so long will they try to borrow money when they can, or pawn their clothes. Who can wonder at it? Can they be blamed? Not much. For many a long week and month they have been on the dreary ocean, and now when for a few weeks there is the chance of some change and recreation, they mean to avail themselves of it, and if they cannot get money to do so from their own wages, they are going to borrow it where they can. It is at this juncture they find the tailor ready to advance money at a large percentage, and reckless of what they give for it, so long as they get the money in cash, they go and 'board the tailor,' and thus get a few dollars with which to enjoy themselves.

This is the sole reason why a number of men, if they had the power to choose, would go to the tailor who charged exorbitant prices for clothes, *not* because they wished to be robbed, but simply because they knew they could borrow *cash* from him, which, moreover,

they know full well is not to be got from an honest tailor.

Were seamen allowed to use a fair proportion of their wages in a foreign port, and at the same time given the option of refusing to go to any tailor who might be selected for them, until an honest man, fair and square in all his dealings, was chosen, the crews of ships would scorn to go to some of the present men to whom they are sent. They would not, moreover, be nearly so accessible to the bribes of boarding masters and crimps, a subject which will be dealt with later.

No more irritating trial can be given to long-voyage seamen, and none with a worse effect on the character and temper of the men, than the present penurious way of dealing out pocket-money, often as if they had no right to it, and that it was a very great privilege being allowed to have any at all.

It is contended that if these long-voyage men were allowed more pocket-money in port, both drunkenness and desertion would greatly increase. Seamen are regarded by many who are over them as a contentious and profligate class, who no sooner get money than they either get drunk, or put it to some equally bad use. Their only wish, it is

maintained, at the end of the voyage, is to have a big spree with the money they have earned. They cannot be trusted with money, and they are better without it. Thus some of the sailor's 'friends' at home argue, apparently wishing the innocent listener to believe they really are thinking and acting for the sailor's best interests, instead of, in reality, their own pockets.

Regarding the question of drunkenness amongst seamen, surely in a city like San Francisco, with its great temptations, especially for strangers, and manifold saloons, with several hundreds of the largest sailing-ships in the world coming there annually, there is an opportunity of finding out what is the real character of the sailor—which is almost second to none in the world.

That merchant seamen—and especially British seamen—if they are fairly treated, are the set of drunken profligates they are often supposed to be, is a very incorrect and misleading view to take. Of course, it serves the purpose of shipping-masters, boarding-masters, tailors, and others also, to keep shipowners, etc., under the impression that seamen are a set of drunken blackguards. The only way to deal with them, it is often

maintained, is to give them as little liberty and pocket-money as can be given. If sailors ever got—as they would if properly treated and fed—the character of good, useful, steady men, they would not be the easy prey of the people mentioned above, and then the means by which these gentry make a livelihood would be taken away—a prospect which they do not like to contemplate.

The facts regarding many hundreds of crews with whom the writer has been intimately acquainted in San Francisco during a period of five years are as follows. Every now and then a ship came in whose crew, with three or four exceptions, were a drunken lot. Very little could be done with them, and they, or most of them, probably deserted the ship. But these crews were vastly the exception. The great majority of ships had two or three men on board who got drunk, whilst the rest were steady fellows; but very often, if two or three came down to the ship at night intoxicated and made some noise, it was frequently very unjustly given out that all hands were drunk. On a number of ships there was practically no drunkenness at all.

It is only a small minority of seamen, as

it is of all other classes of men, who are drunkards. The vast majority are neither drunkards nor total abstainers. If a number do get intoxicated the first night or two on shore, and then keep steady the rest of the time in port, are they to be called drunkards? Not so. I wonder how many of our respectable folk in England, if they made a voyage of four to six months, with all its trials and privations, and landed in a city of excessive temptation, with probably not a friend to meet them, or a respectable door open to them, would be as well behaved as they appear to be in their native place!

There were a number of men, however, who never got drunk at all in San Francisco, and the writer can give a good many proofs as to the respectability of a very large number of merchant seamen. Only one, however, will be given here, as we are dealing with the question as to whether seamen can be trusted with money in a foreign port. Last year (1897), a large number of British ships were 'laid up' from six to eight months, and some longer, owing to bad freights. A large number of men deserted, as usual, and when the rest went to 'lay up' with the ships, and it became clear to the shipowners that they

would have to remain there for some months, they gave the men on a number of ships the option of being paid off, and leaving the ship, instead of remaining on board till the vessel got home. Of course, it was manifestly against the shipowners' interest to keep men for months on ships earning wages, whilst the ship was doing nothing and consequently earning nothing; and about two hundred men agreed to take their wages, minus usually one or two months' pay deducted for the 'expenses' of new men to be got six months later to fill their places.

These men were paid off in the British Consul's office, with a number of 'friends' waiting outside the door to receive them and their money with open arms. Saloons within easy reach awaited them in the streets, whilst two hundred yards or so away was the low end of Kearny Street, and all the enticements of Barbary Coast. Here was temptation in its most subtle form. Thousands of miles from home, unknown, after a long voyage, and about to receive in cash a good sum of money, surely these 'drunken' sailors cannot resist the feast which is spread before their eyes! Still, hard as it may seem to many of those who

regard sailors as merchandise to believe, rather more than one hundred of those men walked past the very real temptations which assailed them, and placed in the writer's hand almost £1,300 in gold, either to send home to their relations, or to keep in safety for them. It is also known that a number of the others sent home large sums of money, and although a few were robbed, yet certainly a very large majority took good care of themselves and their money.

Surely these men might have been trusted with more pocket-money when they were in the ships, with the simple result that instead of drunkenness, contentment would increase.

When seamen 'sign on' in a ship, why should they not sign articles something like the following?

'On arriving at a port, having not less than £5 in wages earned due to them, that each week the ship is alongside a wharf or in dock, the men shall receive a week's wages in cash.

'If a ship "lays-up," that each month the ship remains, the men to receive an amount equal to a week's pay.

'That the money will be discontinued to

any who come on board drunk and creating a disturbance, but be paid regularly to all who conduct themselves properly.'

If men signed Board of Trade Articles to this effect, then they would know exactly what they had to expect in port, and under what conditions it would be given.

Would men who knew that each week they worked by a ship in port they would receive a full week's wages be as likely to desert as those who knew they would either get only a miserable pittance, or perhaps nothing at all? Would not the knowledge of a weekly payment of wages under the conditions named rather tend to make them remain by the ship instead of deserting? We would be very much inclined to think so; but people who do not understand the situation would say, 'Yes; it will tend to keep the men by the ship all the time she is in port, so as to get what money they can, and then at the last moment they will desert.' But this is not a correct view to take, as those who understand these things in San Francisco know that, generally speaking, the bulk of the men who desert do so in the first two or three weeks, whilst those who remain by the ship during her stay in port,

with few exceptions, could not be induced on any consideration to desert. Moreover, they are nearly always truly thankful they were not led to desert when the ship came in, and the others went; whilst numbers of those who have gone, when they find out to their cost what awaits them on shore, would give anything to get back again into the ship. It is not by any means probable that the effect of more pocket-money would be desertions at the end of the stay in port. On the contrary, there would be a decrease of at least half the present number of desertions; and the removal of a very deep-seated grievance would follow.

Although many captains and shipowners strongly oppose a reform of this kind, the withholding of which drives the sailors in shoals into the hands of the crimps, who supply them with money on condition that they will go with them, yet, is it not a fact that from the wages sacrificed by deserting seamen on the Pacific Coast, certain ship-owners, and perhaps some captains, profit considerably?

A few captains, a number of officers, and others who have been connected with seamen for many years unhesitatingly approve of a

change in the existing rule of things ; whilst last, but not least, the writer had a conversation with a boarding-master, who was asserting the futility of any effort to better the condition of seamen in San Francisco. At the end of the conversation he was asked : ' What would be the result if seamen were allowed a week's wages each week they were in port ? ' Without a moment's hesitation he replied : ' Oh, that's a different ticket ; if they got that, not half of them would desert their ships.' This is pretty strong evidence, coming from a man whose bread-and-butter was made by inducing men to desert their ships.

Men under conditions such as these would feel they were being treated like men, and not like children, and their conduct would correspondingly improve. They would not borrow money from the tailor, and they would scorn the proffered dollars of the crimps, for the simple reason that they had the use of a fair proportion of their wages—viz., the amount they earned in port ; whilst the money earned at sea on the voyage out and home would be a good sum to take when the ship reached home.

In addition to decreasing the number of

desertions, the general effect on the character and temper of the men would be good. There are, of course, a number of men who are regular 'birds of passage,' who seldom or never make a whole voyage in a ship, who may always be expected to desert. But do from 800 to 1,100 seamen desert ships annually in San Francisco, leaving behind them in their wages, and two months' advance-pay taken before they ship from San Francisco, many thousands of pounds, without some good reason? Certainly not; great numbers of them are exasperated by the miserable network of rules, tailors, pocket-money, food, and at times unnecessary work, to such a degree that they would sooner be made merchandise of by a boarding-master in the bare *hope* of getting something better, than remain on their ships.

Although it is impossible to compare the navy with the merchant service—the one with its rigid discipline and perfect control of the men at nearly all times, and the other with such very different conditions of management—yet with regard to the matter of paying the men their wages, a very fair comparison can be made.

It used to be the custom in the Royal

Navy to pay crews off at the end of a commission, with a long period of accumulated pay due to them. This they received in a lump sum, after possibly just landing a few days before from a long voyage. This pay they received in towns where public-houses and dens of infamy abounded. What was the result? Simply that money was flung recklessly in every direction, men robbed right and left, and scenes of drunkenness and every kind of profligacy were the rule, and not the exception. Considering the conditions under which they received their pay, who can wonder at it?

More enlightened ideas, however, gradually and against much opposition gained the upper hand; and now the crews of H.M. ships of war are paid wages regularly at sea or in port. They can bank it on board the ship, and draw what they want and whenever they please. It is well to remember very carefully that as it is in the merchant ships of to-day, so it was with the men-of-war in those days—namely, that there were many officers who prophesied that this system of regularly paid wages would result in practically the end of discipline—that drunkenness, desertion, and every evil would increase

tenfold. It was maintained, moreover, that though it was a pity so much drunkenness, profligacy, and robbery went on under the old system, yet that could never be avoided, as they were *only* sailors, and as long as the world lasted would always do precisely the very same thing, which no improved system of pay or supposed good influences would ever alter one jot or one tittle.

Have the forebodings of these prophets been fulfilled? On the contrary, the very reverse has been the case. Drunkenness, debauchery in port, and their attendant evils, have so enormously decreased that the sailors who man the warships of Great Britain to-day are probably the finest body of men in the world, and right it is that they should be so, considering that the safety of an empire depends upon them.

Amongst the causes which have conduced to this improved state of things, one of these has undoubtedly been the abolition of the barbaric system which compelled men to work for long periods without pay, and then, amidst profligacy and temptation, suddenly thrusting upon them all their earnings in a lump sum. *Now* they feel that they are treated like men. Like their brothers on shore they do

their work, receive their pay regularly and frequently, and have control of its use. Treated like men, for the most part they have responded like men, as the majority will always do; whilst on shore, instead of the vile characters who only used to look after them and their money, Miss Weston has provided admirable places of great comfort, where kindness and goodwill prevail. Here, again, treated, as *men*, with genuine hospitality, they have responded with enthusiasm to these well-meant efforts.

Treat the sailors on long-voyage merchant ships in something akin to the same manner, and, under conditions of sobriety, give them a week's wages each week they are in a foreign port, and it will be found, in spite of the forebodings of officers and ship-owners on the subject, that for the most part they will respond by showing the better side of their character, instead of the worst. This change will come simply from the fact that they are being accorded, in a measure, treatment due to honest working men, which at present they certainly do not get.

We must remember, at the same time, that there are a number of long-voyage ships which the apprentices and sailors will tell

you are homes, where liberal rules, good food, and honest treatment prevail. These ships are commanded by men of the finest character—splendid examples of British seamen, who feel a real interest in the welfare and contentment of those under them, and do all they can to make the best out of a hard sea life. Why should not the number of such ships be greatly multiplied? They can be, but in a great measure it rests with the ship-owner and the captain.

CHAPTER VII.

CRIMPING.

SEAMEN, on deserting a ship, sacrifice all the wages they may have earned on the voyage, and of course come on shore penniless. People may ask, Why do boarding-masters, crimps, and shipping-masters, practically spend their lives in trying to induce men to desert their ships when they do not have a penny in their pockets? They cannot rob them, because there is nothing to take. What use, then, are they? The answer is that it is not any valuables that the man has on him that they are after, but the man himself. He is a most valuable piece of merchandise, and great profits often accrue out of his disposal.

By a rule of the port of San Francisco, seamen who are shipped through boarding-masters, etc., on long-voyage ships have to leave behind them two months' advance pay,

£8, which is paid in advance, and deducted from their wages when they are paid off. The sailor is supposed to be given the balance of this £8 after his lodging-bill on shore, clothes, etc., are paid for; but, as a matter of fact, he often receives not a cent, and seldom more than a few shillings. The £8 is divided amongst the boarding-master, shipping-master, runners, etc.

In dealing with the matter of crimping, it is only fair to state that, in the midst of the mass of unrighteousness and vile work connected with it, there are boarding-masters who undoubtedly endeavour to act somewhat fairly to the men when once they have got them, though they must all plead guilty to using every effort, especially in busy times, to lure them to desert their ships.

Also, it must in justice be said that in slack times a number of men are kept for some weeks in their houses, and have, at any rate, food and lodging, who otherwise would be in a hard strait to obtain either.

These facts do little, however, to mitigate the immense evils connected with the system of crimping, carried on so ruthlessly and with so little control as it has been for many years in San Francisco. In writing about crimps

in San Francisco, we must remember that many of these men have been born and brought up in the midst of the system. They have known nothing else, and probably the wretched rules and regulations which make so many men ready to quit ships have had more to do with their success than any efforts made by the crimps.

In busy times, when shipping is brisk and men are scarce on shore, seamen are frequently lured off inward-bound vessels just come in from a four or five to six months' passage, kept in a maudlin condition for twenty-four to forty-eight hours, and then put on board some vessel probably homeward-bound. As these men, if they are only on shore one day, leave their £8 behind, it is easy for anyone to understand the zest with which the crimps and boarding-masters, warmly seconded by the shipping-masters, pursue their avowed calling of getting men to desert if it can by any means in their power be accomplished.

A ship may be seen coming in through the Golden Gate, and as she moves slowly into the bay, a number of boats put off from the shore and make for her. They make fast to the ship, and tow up alongside;

there they wait until she drops anchor and the sails are furled ; then they leap on board with cordial words of welcome to the sailors, and delight at their safe arrival.

Who are these warm-hearted, courteous, pleasant-spoken men ? They are the sailors' 'friends,' the boarding-masters and crimps ! Few and far between are the ships which are not welcomed by these honest and hard-working ' sons of toil ' !

Sailors, as has been previously mentioned, naturally arrive before a great city, after months at sea, in an excitable and impressionable frame of mind. The ship is anchored half a mile to a mile from the shore. She may lie there one to three weeks before coming alongside the wharves to discharge her cargo. They cannot get ashore in that time, and they know that when they do get there very scanty pocket-money will be allotted to them for their enjoyment.

The boarding-masters, however, are on board first thing on arrival to show them that, however much sailors may be looked down upon by people on shore, *they*, at any rate, are determined to extend to these hardy mariners a true Californian 'welcome,' to assure them that their homes are open to

them at meal-time or any other time, and that splendid 'times' await them on shore!

Going right amongst the crew, they tell them in a most descriptive manner the wonders of the city. A little bad drink is circulated and then a little more, and it does not become such a difficult task to rouse the evil passions of men already excited by their arrival in port. A little money is flung round, a dollar or two here and there, perhaps four or five if men are badly wanted, and then the boarding-master and runner may usually be seen handing a few sailors' bags of clothing over the side of the ship, followed by the owners of the bags.

Many of these men desert on the impulse and excitement of the moment, and scores of them deeply repent having done so within two days of leaving. After finding out the true nature of the shore, many of them will tell you they would give anything almost to be able to rejoin the ship. But they cannot, as they are deserters.

The sailors on these ships should be preserved from the inroads and visits of these crimps, etc., for the few days or two or three weeks that the ships on arrival lie at anchor in the bay. During this quiet time the

excitement and emotions of the moment of arrival somewhat wear off, and reason is given time to get the better of impulse. If this were so, there can be no question that a number of fine young sailors who now desert would not do so.

The captains of ships are not to be blamed for allowing these men on board for the following reason. The boarding-masters, etc., have got such control over the system by which men are supplied to ships wanting crews, that if captains refused permission and at all hazards prevented them from boarding their ships at any time, they would, if these captains eventually lost some of their men and wanted others to replace them, refuse to supply them, and a ship *might* have the greatest difficulty in procuring a crew for the homeward passage, and be put to great expense and delay.

If the British Government could bring the matter before the Government of the United States with a view to the same regulations being strictly enforced with regard to the boarding of ships by the boarding-masters, etc., that are in force at home, no doubt the result would be most beneficial to the sailor.

It is, generally speaking, a very bad thing for a sailor to desert his ship in San Francisco. Some few hit a good job, but *very* few. A certain number go 'up country,' which means that in two or three months, after doing a little wandering in California, and getting an odd job now and then on a ranche, they are pretty sure to be in the city again in a condition of life known to seamen as 'beached.' They are then received into the arms of the boarding-master and supplied with a sailor's cap and coat, so that they may once more resemble a sailor in appearance. The 'up-country' experience has generally removed, so far as clothing is concerned, all trace of the sailor, and unless he has a sailor's cap and coat on, a captain might believe a landsman was being smuggled upon him.

A certain number go on the Pacific coast, but after a few voyages, especially in winter, amongst the wet and cold of northern ports, and the very heavy labour of loading or discharging a cargo of lumber, most are glad to leave it and go 'deep water' again. The number of Scandinavians employed in the Pacific coasting trade is astonishing, and considering the number of those who desert

from British ships it is remarkable how very few British are to be found employed in the trade.

But what, we ask, becomes of the main army of deserters whom one sees coming ashore from the ships which anchor in the bay, pulled ashore by their true 'friend and protector,' the boarding-house runner, and sometimes by no less a personage than the boarding-master himself? What honour, what privilege, to be in such company! Sometimes, very soon after the anchor is dropped, one or two of these boats are seen pulling away from the ship. More persons are in the boat now than when she left the wharf. In fact, she often seems crowded and low in the water. But as she draws nearer, we observe long motionless white things like pillow-cases piled up in the boat. What may these be? They are the sailors' bags with probably all his worldly belongings inside, and which worldly goods, in addition to himself, he is now about to bestow on the boarding-master. Up to the wharf they come and out they jump. What joy! on firm safe ground again. Away from hard tack and salt pork and coloured hot water. Away from endless sea and sky week by week for

long months past. Now for a good time for two or three weeks ! and with springy step and smiling face they leap ashore.

‘Oh, but what’s this ? A carriage to drive up in ?’ ‘You bet we’re dealing with the right man this time, anyhow. I told you — was all right. I said so as soon as I seed him. No man can talk as ’e did and with such a straight look about him and be a liar. ’E’s going to drive us up and give us all the money we want. I tell you, boys, it’s better than staying on an old wind-jammer, where we can get neither money nor clothes unless we pay double prices.’

Then they walk round and survey the equipage until the happy face of —, the boarding-master, beaming with smiles, turns round, and he sings out :

‘Come on, boys, let’s be off. Some of you get up beside — in front, there’s plenty of room, and the rest of you sit behind and let your legs dangle over the back. It’s just about supper-time, and you *must* be hungry, and I always like to give my men a good square meal, and then you can go and have a good time up town. There’s the Monte Carlo, and the Eureka, and Midway Plaisance, and the Cascade, and many another place worth

a visit from any respectable man in San Francisco. When you've had a good time on shore then we'll get you a ship—any sort of ship you wish; and wherever you want to sail for, we'll take good care you go there and nowhere else. There'll be £4 a month wages, too, which is better than you've been getting by a long chalk. That's what's the matter, boys; and when you leave us you'll just want to bless us, and tell us the time you spent here has been fine, so that's what.

'Of course you needn't trouble your minds about the wages you've left behind for six months, and you'll only have to leave us £8, so you'll have at least one or two months' pay to take when you get home after working for twelve months, and what could a sailor expect more than that? So drive on, —; make the mare travel; the boys are hungry, and we must show them what Frisco hospitality is like, anyhow.'

Cigars are handed round—seven for ten cents (5d.)—quickly lighted, and away drives Jack, monarch of all he surveys.

It had not been mentioned that many large ships had been 'laid up' in San Francisco Bay for six months or so, which

ships happened now to be mostly chartered, and wanted nearly full crews, as the majority and in some cases all of their men had been paid off or had deserted. Mention had not been made also of the fact that there were very few sailors on shore, and it was a very difficult matter to find crews for them. One of these ships had been lying in the bay loaded and ready for sea for several days, waiting to get several men to complete the crew. The men must be got. There they were, come right to hand. Arrived at the Sailor's Haven they sit down to a good meal. Those appointed for the slaughter are quietly, unknown to them, selected. Drinks are passed round, and a few 'knock-out' drops placed in the drink soon reduce all to a state of intoxication. More drinks are administered, and there is soon left neither the desire nor ability for a walk 'up town.' There they lie, as safe and helpless as if they were convicts in the condemned cell.

Daylight comes, and presently those selected for the ship are placed in the same conveyance that drove them up so proud and glad, little more than twelve hours before, with the same bags, but not always the same clothes, the same men also, but unconscious and oblivious

to all that was going on. Down to the wharf, put like bags of grain into a boat, and away they go to the ship, and a few hours later the tug is alongside; the crew, except those lying helpless in their bunks, are on the fo'c's'le-head, swinging round the capstan, getting up the anchor, whilst 'Rolling Home' and 'Homeward Bound' are wafted over the waters of the bay from lips probably honestly glad to be homeward bound.

What about those placed last on board? They awake out of their drunken sleep outside the Heads. The tug is gone, sail has been made, and the ship is breasting the waves of the wide Pacific on her long journey home. How do they feel now? Mad, miserable, ashamed, reckless. They know now how they were duped; how they were lured ashore by false promises and enticements; how they have sacrificed six months' wages, and two months' advance pay on the homeward voyage, for the sake of twelve drunken hours on shore.

Did these men sign articles, as they are bound to do, before sailing on this ship? Oh dear no! Some three or four 'stiffs' were easily collected out of the streets, who for a trifle went into the Consul's office and signed

their names on the articles, and also signed away the two months' advance of these sailors — £8 — whilst the objects of their attention knew absolutely nothing of what was passing.

When ships are wanting men badly, and sailors are scarce on shore, this little play is every now and then enacted. It is done, of course, so secretly that it is a very difficult matter to prove. The following instance, however, is a good illustration of the case in point: The ship — had been kept some days in the bay last year waiting for several men to complete her crew. One afternoon the large ship — came into the bay, after being at sea for months. The crew, of course, knew nothing about the scarcity of sailors on shore, and the ships waiting in the bay for men. The crimps, as usual, boarded the ship, and extraordinary tales of the lucrative jobs on shore just waiting for men to fill them were told, the usual drinks flew round, and some of the men went with them. Owing to the time the ship came in, they could not have reached the shore before 3 p.m., or later. The next morning, at 10 a.m., the writer was talking to the second officer of the ship which was waiting for men in the bay, and he remarked, 'We've got our men; they're off

the ——, which came in yesterday afternoon.' He was asked, 'Are they drunk?' and the answer was, 'Yes, violent; we've got 'em locked up.' Then he was asked, 'What time did they come on board?' and he said 'Nine o'clock.'

Now, the British Consul's office where men sign articles on British ships closes at 3 p.m., and opens at 10 a.m. Even if these men did get ashore by 2.30 p.m., which was impossible, it is ridiculous to think that, fresh from a six months' voyage, they would go within half an hour of landing and sign articles on another long-voyage ship going a four or five months' trip. We all know that, easily taken in as sailors are, they would never do that. They were on board the —— by 9 a.m. in a drunken state, and the Consul's office did not open till 10 a.m. Who, then, signed the articles, and their two months' advance away? On this and kindred subjects being mentioned to a shipping authority, his reply was that it was best not to mention these things, as they had to be done in busy times. There is no question that numbers of captains abominate and detest the 'ring' which mainly controls the shipping of seamen in San Francisco. If things were made more

tolerable for men on the ships, large numbers who now desert would not do so, and they would not be under the necessity of getting men in such large numbers, as at present, through shipping and boarding masters.

Sometimes men, when there is little shipping going on, have to stay ashore some time before they can get a ship. The boarding-master, when he has to keep them some two or three weeks, however, amply makes up any little expenses incurred in food, etc., when the busy times come, and he gets a number of £8 notes for a forty-eight hours' stay ashore. Men who stay ashore two or three weeks or so come off the ship generally well-dressed, looking neat and up to the mark. In a very few days the neat appearance is generally conspicuous by its absence. The clean collar is no longer visible, and a beard, moustache, etc., may be observed beginning to grow; clothes get dirty, the better ones often finding their way into the pawn-shop, and it soon becomes apparent what contact with the lower elements of San Francisco means. In the great majority of cases the sailor or apprentice who deserts in San Francisco suffers not only in appearance, but in character as well.

On the other hand, mark the men and boys who remain by their ships. Observe a crowd of two or three hundred of them in the evening after the day's work on the ship is over. No one could fail to be struck with their well-dressed, neat, and respectable appearance, equal to any body of men in the world who have hard work to do. Alas for many of the deserters! Nothing can injure and destroy a man's self-respect, and make him utterly reckless as to what becomes of him, more than suddenly to have it brought home to him that he has been duped, has believed a lie, has lost his wages, and is stranded amongst men in whose power he completely is, without even having left to him the choice of a ship in which he may wish to go, he being, to all intents and purposes, a slave.

In spite of the exasperating nature of things on too many British sailing-ships regarding food, pocket-money, tailor, etc., still, if the vast majority of those who now desert could be heard, they would say with no uncertain voice to all sailors coming to San Francisco, whether on 'hard' or 'easy' ships, 'Stay where you are; you are better off on board.'

A certain number of these deserting seamen are put on board the whaling vessels which go every year up North to catch whales, and arrive back in seven or eight months with very often little or no wages to take, as the men are paid according to the profits made by the ship, and at times no profits are made. Other seamen go up to the great salmon fisheries, and help in catching salmon; but the great majority of them are kept to feed long-voyage ships wanting men, and most of those who go away for a few months, at the end of that time are usually to be found back in the city trying to 'ship home.'

The efforts made by boarding-masters and crimps to get men to desert their ships rise and fall like the tide. When ships are 'laid up' for months, and there is little prospect of their requiring crews for some time, then these gentlemen take a quiet spell and bask in the bright sunshine of California.

Presently busy times come again; ships load and sail rapidly one after another, and require the whole or part of a crew to take the places of deserters, or men who may happen to have been 'paid off.'

The need of crews for the ships is the boarding-masters' opportunity. Men have

to be found for them, and like giants refreshed with wine—after a period of repose, or easy ‘work’—shipping-masters, boarding-masters, and all their runners, rise and advance to the fray, using their conspicuous talents to get men from ‘inward bounders,’ unsuspecting farmers, or others of an unwary disposition, into their nets, placing them shortly afterwards on the ships which require crews.

Hard ‘work’ requires rest, and the time lately spent in such they feel had not been wasted. Moreover, they know that good use has been made of the slack time. They have sat on Vallejo Street Wharf day after day, for long hours at a stretch, devising new plans for ‘benefiting’ the hundreds of sailors who are winging their way across the stormy ocean. They have stood frequently and patiently at ‘Lime-Juice Corner’ discussing state politics and the greatness of their country, and, moreover, have chewed enormous quantities of tobacco, and spat all the livelong day; and who, we may well ask, wishing to benefit mankind, could do more than that?

The result of this is that when the outward-bound ships are getting ready to sail, and

the 'inward bounders' come to their anchorage in the bay, the sailors are met with a marvellous welcome, and torrents of eloquence and the flood-gate of water-front whisky are opened upon them. A striking case was the ship —— which arrived from Europe after a rather long passage. As the good ship came in through the Golden Gate, the sailors agreed amongst themselves that none of them would go with the gentry whom they knew would soon be amongst them. Presently the ship dropped anchor, and a battalion of boarding-masters and runners advanced upon the sailors, armed not with boarding-pikes and cutlasses, but with eloquence and whisky. After furling the sails Jack came down to get his dinner, and found the privacy of the fo'c's'le had been invaded; for here and there, seated in various places, or strolling casually up and down, looking with much interest at things which adorn the bunks of the sailorman, are the very gentlemen they had been expecting. Dinner proceeds, and the corks are first pulled out of the bottles of eloquence which now adorn the forecastle, and after the first pop of greeting, the contents are poured out with all their exhilarating sparkle and freshness. It is not necessary

to detail the kind of stuff put before these apparently stolid and immovable men. It has been partially done elsewhere. At any-rate, not a man would budge.

'Well, well,' say the men-savers, 'that's all right; if you won't come, you won't, so that's what's the matter! You can make your fortune if you come; but as you'd sooner live in a 'lime-juicer' at £2 15s. per month, than settle in God's own country, well, you can stay where you are, and we won't quarrel about it, and we'll just have a drop all round to show there's no bad feeling about the matter. Try this, lads; it's fine stuff.'

The bottles of eloquence having been emptied and no visible effect produced, the whisky was pulled out, and to show it was 'fine stuff,' and not drugged, the gents from the shore first took a good pull, and Jack's latent suspicion as to what the stuff consisted of was removed. The bottle was passed round, and every sailor took a nip, and an expression of profound satisfaction came over the faces of the crew. They also became rather more communicative, and were no longer as stone. It was no good, however, urging them to leave the ship, as they intended

to make the round trip in her. They were much obliged for the drink, as it was the first they had tasted for five months, and it made them feel quite happy. There was nearly half a bottle left, so when the silver-tongued ones suggested they should finish it, there was a ready response to this brilliant suggestion, and it was finished.

Slightly more cordial relations had thus been gradually established between the shore and the sea. Wonderful stories were now related, and horrible jokes and waterfront wit went hand-in-hand; but still the main purpose of the diplomats from the 'Seamen's Landlords' Association' of San Francisco had not been attained, and seemed as far off as ever. The maximum of eloquence and oratorical power had been shown to these men. A bottle of whisky had been consumed, and *yet* they were as determined as ever.

Are these ambassadors from the shore foiled? Can it be that they have tried all their arts on a crew of simple seamen, and not even got one to respond? Indeed, it seems to be so; but stay, there is another card to play. It is a trump, and always reserved for extreme cases.

'Well, we're off now,' says the colonel of the philanthropists; 'but, by golly! I quite forgot I've got a bottle of first-class old Scotch in my pocket. I wish I'd given it instead of that first lot. To tell you the truth, I thought it was the 'Scotch' when I gave it you. I just happened to feel in my pocket, and I find I gave you the wrong bottle. That first bottle was poor stuff, it's American made, and they can't make it here; but this is the real thing, boys, so you may as well taste it, as it comes from the old country, and it'll make you think you're there, so that's what.'

So the bottle of good old 'Scotch' was handed round, and with suspicion completely disarmed, every sailor took his tot. Then broke forth again the babel of eloquence. Then was the stolid will broken, the wavering one shattered, and all convinced that the ship was a hell, and the shore a heaven. Then, and not till then, was there a rushing about, and packing up of clothes into bags and chests. The monuments of industry from the shore 'worked' *now* tooth and nail to cram his man's belongings into his bag, and help him and his bag to the ship's side, and first the bag and then the man are

slithered down into one of the boats belonging to the flotilla, which had come off to the attack an hour or two before.

In an incredibly short time after the passing round of that bottle of fine old 'Scotch,' every sailor had his bag packed, and they were being pulled in company to the shore. Why this sudden change? Why this weakening of apparently resolute men? The answer is easy, the explanation simple. The first bottle was all right, the second was *drugged*.

This ship is an extreme instance, where all the men deserted at once. It is the exception, not the rule. Generally, four or five or six or eight men go right away, and a few more perhaps may depart when the ship comes alongside the wharf to discharge her cargo. There are ships which keep their crews intact, but they are few and far between, and there are ships which only lose one or two men, but they also are greatly the exception.

Another instance was the ship — which arrived not long since in San Francisco, after a voyage lasting almost seven months. During that long and dreary time land was sighted once and once only by those on board.

Towards the end provisions began to run short, and unless the writer's memory deceives him, the supply of water on board also became a matter of anxiety. A weary crew manned the ship when more than six months had been spent on the ocean. The captain, worn out no doubt with anxiety and worry about the undue length of his voyage, died of some obscure disease when the ship was in the Pacific. No doctor, no proper skill or knowledge of his complaint or the kind of treatment he should have, was available, no help within thousands of miles, and so he gently lay down and presently passed away from a land which to him had been all sea to the land where there shall be no more sea.

The command of the ship now devolved upon the chief officer, although virtually he had been in that position since the captain took ill. His first duty was to gather that worn-out crew together and read the solemn burial service over the body of the late captain, and then they all watched solemnly and quietly as it was put into the waters of the wide Pacific and sank down in those depths where many a brave sailor has found his last resting-place.

With food and water becoming scarce, with the death of the captain, and scurvy beginning to show itself amongst several members of the crew, we can well understand how gloomy was the outlook, and how depressed were those on board. It was long since they had not only seen land, but even a sail ; however, ' the night is darkest before the morn,' and one day the welcome sight of a vessel made all on board feel indescribably glad with that gladness which comes when hope is at the lowest ebb, when what you long for, but have practically ceased to expect, suddenly appears. It was not long before the two ships neared each other, the one worn out, distressed, almost in despair, the other fresh, careless, light-hearted, doing some voyage on the Pacific coast or to the Sandwich Islands.

Very soon was a boat launched, and more than kind were those on the American vessel to the British crew. Provisions and other necessaries to enable them to reach San Francisco were willingly sent on board, and with the knowledge that a week or two more would bring them to the end of their journey new life was given to all in the ship.

At last the ship, with its sea-worn crew,

beheld the welcome sight of the Golden Gate, and a few hours later the anchor was dropped and the ship lay at rest in the bay.

It would have been a grand thing for some wealthy gentleman to have met such a ship as this—ay, and many another—and got permission to take half the crew right ashore the first night, and half the second, give them a good dinner, take them to some first-rate place of amusement, and then send them off safely on board the ship. What a welcome such a man would have got !

Here is a fine field for many an English gentleman, young or middle-aged, who may have large means and nothing to do except shoot, fish, and hunt all the year round, with a number of balls, dinners, and garden-parties thrown in, whilst his only hospitality is shown to those who can afford to return it. There is not only a great deal of shallowness attached to a life of this kind, but very often much evil as well. Why should not many a man of fortune, instead of drifting through life doing little else but paying court to society and seeking pleasure, make an effort *himself*, and not by donations or subscriptions, to do something for his poorer brethren ?

There are many men in England who wish

to see the world, who are true sportsmen, and at the same time have a bracing moral atmosphere about them, men who do not wish to preach or become clergymen, but who believe in regular church-going and their daily religious duties. Suppose a man of this type went for a year or two to a place like San Francisco with the intention of not only 'seeing life,' but being of some use to his fellow creatures. He could have riding *ad lib.*, cricket, football, or golf, could probably join a polo club, and also get capital duck or quail shooting and good fishing at no great distance, besides being in touch with an interesting city, and dwelling in a beautiful climate.

If such a one came out and gave up two or three days a week to going on board ships, getting to know those on board and helping to entertain them in the evening, either at the Seamen's Institute or privately, he would not only be a power for good amongst officers, apprentices, and seamen, but would add greatly to his own enjoyment of life and probably develop an interest in the welfare of humanity which he had never previously thought existed within him. Such an interest really exists in most men, but its

presence remains often undetected and dormant from the mere fact that acquaintance with mankind, except personal friends, has been of a very limited character, or else purely connected with business or work of one kind or another.

Most people, if they have been away on a visit for a few weeks, look anxiously out at the station to see if there is anyone to meet them, and if not, often feel some little disappointment. If such is the case with those living on shore, what must be the feelings of those on board a ship who have reached the end of a journey—not a few hundred miles in a train, but 17,000 or 18,000 miles of sea? Yes, good would it be if ships making these long voyages up the Pacific coast could be met on arrival, not by crimps, but by warm-hearted friends assuring them of genuine hospitality during the evenings they spent on shore. But it wants money, and yet not a very large sum, though the writer found it a very difficult matter to get a comparatively small sum, and was consequently only able to do the merest fraction of what might be done by many who have ample means, if they would only take the step and launch out into the seething masses of humanity on

the seas wanting help such as has been indicated, and too often finding none.

The ship referred to dropped her anchor. The calm and beautiful bay, the picturesque city laid out in front, and the brilliant Californian sun, one might have imagined, would have brought a touch of rest and peace to those weary sailors if they had been left alone. This, however, was not to be. Times were busy, ships were loading and sailing rapidly, and men were scarce on shore and hard to get to fill up the crews of those vessels which wanted men to take the places of deserters.

The crimps boarded the ship the moment of arrival, and all their tempting goods and chattels were laid out before the crew, and a number of the men were soon on the way to the shore with their 'friends and protectors.'

On the next morning the writer met six of those young sailors in the Seamen's Institute, and asked them how they possibly could have done such a mad act as to leave the ship with six months' pay due to them. Their simple reply was that they were wretched in mind and body, with an intense desire to go ashore and have a good meal.

It has already been stated that their

'guardians' were ready at hand to satisfy both these desires, and offer much more in addition.

Four of these sailors were badly touched with scurvy. They showed the writer their legs from the knee downwards, and they were much discoloured; moreover, their gums were affected.

The writer told them they were not fit to go to sea, and should be in the hospital, and said he would go at once to the British Consul, and arrange to get them sent there. They replied they would have to see the boarding-master about it. Unfortunately, the writer did not ask their names, nor that of the house in which they were staying; but they promised, after seeing him, to come back, and wait at the Institute till they heard what the Consul said.

The matter was immediately reported to the British Consul, who promised to see the men attended to, and asked for them to be sent to him without delay.

The writer then returned to the Institute, but the sailors were not there. He never saw them again, and the next morning ascertained that those men, with scurvy upon them, were shipped away for another five months'

voyage on a deep-water ship bound round the Horn, after being sixteen hours on shore from a voyage of about seven months !

The British Consul was in no way to blame. The abominable conditions under which sailors are shipped away, after being lured or starved out of their ships, are the cause of such monstrous occurrences.

That ship lay in San Francisco three months. The sail-maker on board, an old and most respectable man, fell ill. He was taken to the hospital, and there he lay for about a fortnight, a perfect example of patience and resignation, and then, without much suffering, without a murmur, and only words of gratitude for those who attended him, that brave old sailor breathed his last, and was laid to rest thousands of miles from his home, his friends, and all he loved. An apprentice fell down the hold, and narrowly escaped being killed. He, too, was taken to the hospital, but happily recovered ; though as he lay there he saw, on the bed opposite, his old shipmate, who had shared with him all the dangers and trials of the long voyage, pass peacefully beyond the veil.

Some little time before the ship sailed for home, the carpenter, a comparatively young

man, was taken ill. Everything that was possible was done for him. An excellent man was in command of the ship, having come out from England to take that position, and he urged him either to go to the hospital, or be sent home overland. But the carpenter refused. He would go in the ship, and nothing would turn him from his purpose. The night before the ship sailed the writer held a service on board, and somehow it seemed a very solemn one, and the vessel sailed next day on her long voyage to England. She arrived safely home, but the carpenter did not land with those who stepped ashore so gladly in old England. Not many weeks after the voyage commenced, he was obliged to take to his bunk, and his life fast ebbed away. Shortly before he died, he asked an apprentice who was with him to sing a hymn, and the boy sang 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and soon afterwards he passed away, and they said his end was peace.

Perhaps the writer has deviated a little from the subject which he has in hand, but such a story cannot fail to excite interest.

CHAPTER VIII.

'RUNNING MEN OUT' OF SHIPS.

FROM 800 to 1,100 seamen annually deserted British sailing-ships in San Francisco from 1892 to 1898, leaving behind them when they deserted, and in the two months' advance of £8 which most of them left with the boarding-masters before they sailed again from San Francisco, many thousands of pounds annually. Who profits by all this money? Does the Board of Trade get all the wages into their possession which are sacrificed by deserting seamen? We trow not, for at present it is no difficult thing to produce bills against a sailor which go far to prove that when they are paid there are no surplus wages for the Board of Trade to take. Do any shipowners at all profit by the wages of deserting seamen? Do any captains of ships? For it stands to reason if a ship takes five or

six months, or perhaps coming from other ports a much longer time, to reach San Francisco, and all or most of the sailors desert, that unless the wages earned by those men who desert have to be paid *in toto* to the Board of Trade, it is a great incentive to men who may not be of the highest principle to put some pressure on the crew to leave the ship. If they do desert, except for the wages of the officers and petty officers, the wages of the men before the mast are saved to the shipowners.

That such attempts to put pressure, or what is called 'run men out' of ships, are made there can be no manner of doubt. At the same time, there need be no doubt that the large majority of shipowners and captains would scorn to do such a thing, and feel a loathing for those who dare in a distant port, where peculiar opportunities exist for getting rid of sailors, try and take such an advantage of the men they have engaged to work on their ships.

The interesting process entitled 'running men out' of ships is, of course, done secretly, and is not easily observable by the ordinary eye, unless it is one which sees beneath the surface of things. It is not a matter of

knocking sailors down with belaying-pins, or rope-ending them, for such things cannot be done on British ships now without great risk to the doers of such deeds. No, a different and more insidious course is pursued, and one of the first signs that the process has commenced is the announcement that no pocket-money will be given to the men during the time the ship is in port.

What could be more exasperating to men after a long voyage than this? It hurts far more, strikes far deeper, than a blow from a belaying-pin. 'Well,' say the sailors, 'he says he won't give pocket-money; we'll ask him to give us a tailor, and then we can board *him* for money.' But this is also denied. Then follows a few chapters of 'nagging' and fault-finding for no reason whatever, giving them unnecessary work and unnecessarily long hours, and after a time, as a rule, the men, sooner than remain, as they say, 'on such a hell,' in reckless exasperation accept the money offered by the crimps, and shortly afterwards may be found in the boarding-master's house.

That this 'running out' process certainly accounts for a number of the 800 to 1,100 seamen who annually desert in San Francisco

is a well-known fact, but it is kept very quiet. As has been stated before, it is done secretly and insidiously and is difficult to prove, but the following instances will be sufficient to any candid mind.

The ship — came in after a smart voyage of less than four months from England. Within three weeks of her arrival all the sailors before the mast except three had deserted. The writer remarked to the chief officer one day whilst on the ship, 'Nearly all your men have deserted.' 'Oh yes,' was the reply, 'we did our best to run them out.' For pity's sake, why? A sailing-ship is much more dependent on men to work her sails, etc., and get her along than a steamer. Here is a ship which makes a very smart passage from England, the crew must have worked well, then why, in the name of fortune, should they be 'run out' of the ship? If they wanted to get rid of the crew, why not, in an open and honest manner, offer them their wages and pay them what they had rightfully earned, and probably most of the men would gladly have taken the money and left the ship; but to try and run a whole crew out of a ship in an underhand manner is a miserable trick.

On another occasion an officer on a ship remarked to the writer with reference to his crew: 'We've run four of them out, and I think we'll be able to manage the rest.' Yet again an officer on a large four-master told the writer he had received instructions if possible to 'run the men out of ship'; and an officer recently returned from a long voyage remarked to the writer, who was conversing with him on the subject, that they had succeeded in 'running their men out' that very voyage, whilst others have told the same kind of story.

Letters were written to the *Times* last year endeavouring to prove that no profit is made from the wages of deserting seamen, and that shipowners were rather losers than gainers by men deserting in foreign ports; but it must stand to reason that no effort would ever be made to 'run men out' of *any* ship, *unless there was profit in doing so*, and if there was loss incurred by men deserting every effort would be made to prevent them doing so, but as a matter of fact one seldom hears regret but often satisfaction expressed when men desert.

Although great numbers of shipowners and captains no doubt hate to think that

such things are done, yet the fact that there *are* shipowners who do not hesitate to take advantage of their men shows that every protection the Board of Trade can possibly extend to seamen should be given.

An effort was made four years ago to induce a shipowner, whose ships often call at San Francisco, to subscribe to the Seamen's Institute in that city. In a long and friendly interview he expressed himself very favourably towards that work, but in asking the writer to call in two days, said one of his ships had just arrived in the —, and he would ask the captain, who had recently come from San Francisco, what his opinion was about the matter. In two days the writer called again, and felt somewhat surprised at being met rather coldly after the cordiality shown on the previous visit. On the writer asking what the captain had said about the Seamen's Institute in San Francisco, the reply was given that the captain said the writer interfered between masters and men. The request was then made that the shipowner should state *what* this interference consisted in, and after some pressure he replied: 'You try to persuade the men not to desert their ships.' This, and this only,

was the interference, that an effort had been made to prevent a lot of decent hard-working sailors from drifting body and soul into the hands of the land-sharks of San Francisco.

Who can assert, after such a statement, that money is not made out of the wages of deserting seamen, when a shipowner actually counted it 'interference' in trying to persuade the men not to desert? He clearly *wanted* them to desert. Why? To obtain the wages they left behind—there could be no other reason.

A case in which a regular plan was concocted to 'induce' the sailors to leave a ship is really interesting. The large ship — arrived with a remarkably fine crew of seamen. Six or seven of them were total abstainers when they arrived, and remained so during the months they spent in San Francisco. Several of them were apprentices out of their time putting in a year in the forecastle before going up for their examination for second mate. They were in every sense as fine a crew of men, all British except two, as could be seen on an English merchant ship.

The ship had already been rather more than twelve months on the voyage, calling at

various ports ; the same crew had been in her all the time, and they all had a good deal of money due—from £15 to £27 or £28 each in wages earned. The ship was to 'lie up' for several months, waiting for a freight, and it was a very inconvenient thing for the expenses of the ship that the pay of a whole crew, their food, etc., should be going on whilst the ship was idle and earning nothing. It would never do to offer to pay the men all the money that was owing to them, as they had so much coming to them, and if they gave them all that was due sailors might actually begin to think that they had a right to all their wages in a foreign port, and that would be an unfortunate precedent! No, certainly not; so those behind the scenes, the personally and monetarily interested parties, met in their sanctum and communed one with another after the following fashion. It has been mentioned that boarding-masters hold in their hands, or rather on their lips, an enormous number of lucrative 'jobs' on shore for sailors to take and make their fortune.

'These chaps,' said the boarding-master to the others in the business, 'are just like the usual run. They only want managing right and they'll come like sheep. They're

going to begin on the ship with the usual medicine, and give 'em no pocket-money and no tailor, so they'll be done for money and clothes. Then we've got a few good jobs going now, 50 dollars and 60 dollars a month—see? punching —— and —— in their honest ribs. 'They can step right into 'em and we can give them one or two dollars each pocket-money, and then most of 'em will come. We'll try that first, and then if there are any that won't come to the scratch we'll try a little soothing syrup in a week or two. They can't expect to get their money here, seein' as how they are not by law paid off, and they've a lot of money coming to them. Now, sailors will always jump at the chance of a little money, especially when they've just come off a long voyage, and if any of 'em don't jump at the splendid jobs we offer we'll just tell them they can, in addition to having a number one job, have 25 dollars in cash of their wages. They'll jump at it. They've each got from 80 to 130 dollars owing them, so we'll give —— dollars to ——, and —— dollars to ——, and leave the rest for the other chaps.'

Thus they reasoned one with another. The first spoke was put in the wheel when

the crew were informed, 'No pocket-money or tailor when in port,' and it was hoped this would 'do the trick' with most of them. This medicine was left to mix well with the system, and plenty of time was given it to act. But not a man budged, nor would they accept drinks or bribes.

When the bitter pill of 'No money, no tailor' had been given time to act, and had failed to do so, it was decided to approach the patients with the '25 dollars per man,' in addition to 'good job' soothing syrup. So Mr. —, the boarding-master as representing the syndicate, came down to the ship, spotless as to his coat, collar, and tie, and general appearance, with large and dazzling rings on his fingers conspicuously displayed, a gold watch-chain dangling from his waistcoat, an atmosphere as of benevolence and deep desire for the welfare of mankind surrounding him, the well-wisher and true 'benefactor' of all seamen, an expression as if his one consuming thought, his life-long wish, was how he could 'benefit' seafaring men, and how save them from their present life, and obtain for them good work and good wages on shore. With a halo of this kind around him, and deep respect for every sailor in

the fo'c's'le written on his features, he calmly enters, sits quietly down amongst the men, and commences his oration, with a large number of jobs ready apparently in his pocket, from a job on a coaster at 40 dollars a month to a good place on a fruit ranche, with easy times, nothing to do, and big money in it as well; or if these didn't suit the sailors' tastes, there was the salmon-fishing and cannaries in Alaska in the summer, with a fortune simply waiting for any sailor to pick up who decided to go. There just happened to be a demand for fourteen or fifteen steady men this week—men just like themselves were the ones they wanted. They had to get them this week, and it was one chance in a thousand. Some chaps went up last year, and came back in a few months with 600 dollars apiece. This was the chance of a lifetime, and if they were foolish enough not to settle to go to Alaska right away, they could get a first-rate 'job' on shore in San Francisco. Work was good and wages high now. No men were out of work, and sailors were the very men that were wanted. He could fit them out right away in any of those kind of jobs; but the only thing he would have nothing to do with was shipping sailors on deep-water ships which

went round the Horn, and he had a perfect horror of whalers ! Or if they wished to settle altogether in 'God's own country,' they could take out their papers and become citizens, and then they could go in for politics, and there was no reason why they shouldn't get to be Governor of California, and perhaps President of the United States. He had a political 'pull' himself, and he'd do his best to shove them on ; but don't speak to him of vessels round the Horn and whaling, as he was not interested in them. What he wished to do was, by words of love and true sympathy, to draw men from their hard lives, and get them good paying jobs on shore, when they could live in a 'free' country, and have ease and plenty all the days of their lives. Would they not come with him and settle in this earthly paradise ?

Toying with his watch-chain, benign and peaceful in countenance, he thus cast his flies, and tried them in the pool to see if the fish would rise. But, lo ! not a fish stirred. As on a muggy, thundery day, they lay still and sullen in the depths, and would not move.

What ! not move to these marvellous 'opportunities' ? Impossible ! and sailors, too ! *How* can they neglect the chance of their

lives ! It must be because they want to have *all* their wages paid them or none, else they won't leave the ship ; that must be the reason. But that is impossible. No sailors from British ships ever get paid off in San Francisco with all their wages, nearly always one, or two, and sometimes three, months' pay being deducted for 'expenses.' No, no ; they never get all—they couldn't really expect it. Besides, times were bad with shipowners at present ; indeed, so bad that the captain had been obliged to tell them they could neither have pocket-money nor a tailor during the month or so the ship would be alongside the wharves.

This, then, was the proposition he now wanted to put before them : He'd happened to hear one day, quite by 'chance,' that the captain wouldn't give them any money, and it struck him it was mighty hard, and only just that morning he'd heard of these Alaska jobs ; he just wished he wasn't so much taken up looking after the welfare of sailors, else he'd have gone right off himself. However, knowing they were a fine, steady lot of men—just the men for the job—he determined to give way himself, as he was always practising self-denial, and try and get the work for them,

and persuade the skipper to give them, at any rate, 25 dollars each of their wages, and they could buy a few things, go right up to Alaska, and make their fortunes.

'I wanted yer to have the job, lads,' he said. 'I did the best I could, and yer can have 25 dollars each besides the job. That's what's the matter, so I'll tell yer, else yer'll be stuck in the ship out in the bay for months — no money, or tailor, or liberty when you "lay up"; and by the time this packet sails, you'll be back from Alaska with 600 dollars in your pocket. I'll send my buggy and cart for your things this evening, and you can drive up to the house in time for supper, and hear — play a tune on the mouth-organ. 'E's a cough-drop at that business, so that's what.'

Thus he talks to the sailors, and not only he, but others of the same kidney come round, like vultures hovering over carrion, waiting patiently for the final moment when they can swoop down and carry off their prey.

An old man very like a philosopher goes round. He is a large and heavy man, and looks as if his life had been spent in deep study over the gravest problems which beset the human race. It is hard to believe that

his great learning has led him to devote his life to the 'care' of merchant seamen. Yet so it is, and in addition to the general look of the philosopher which surrounds him, there is, sitting no doubt rather awkwardly on his shoulders, a head with a most philanthropic front to it, gained, no doubt, by long 'devotion' to that most interesting of all studies—mankind.

The true lesson of this is, doubtless, that he has been so given to study and observation that he has had no time for hard work. The object of the birth of sailors into the world is, in his estimation, that they are destined to work like other men, but have their wages 'kept' for them by people like himself, who exist only to 'befriend' them. This business did not entail hard manual work necessarily, and left him plenty of time for 'study' and the doing of 'good works,' so he had decided to devote his whole life to it.

The only time when he has hard work to do is when some ignorant sailor is actually foolish enough to deny that he is bound by the laws of creation to deliver his wages into these 'philanthropists'' hands for 'safe keeping,' and, indeed, goes so far as to argue the point, and say he has a right to keep hold of his

own wages. Then ensues some little conversation, in which the philosopher, out of his vast store of learning, seeks to show the sailor how extreme is his ignorance of his duty in this world. Sometimes the sailor refuses to believe, with a sailor's obstinacy, the truth his big friend tries to teach him ; and there comes one of those times when, out of pure regard for the sailors' interests, 'work' has to be done and talk ceases. One or two good smacks in the face, a jab from a runner behind, and the sailor is soon, as a little child, listening to his preceptors, and the matter ends in the philosopher's favour, as somehow it usually does.

However it may be done, the boarding-masters usually get all the men they want ; but somehow in this particular instance not even 'weighty' arguments nor the prospect of immediate wealth and comfort could allure the sailors from the ——. Daily were the efforts renewed till the ship had discharged her cargo and was ready to leave the wharf and lie at anchor out in the bay.

It was Sunday, and the sailors were lying in their bunks or strolling about the decks when he of the rings and watch-chain came down, and his bright cheery face as it came

over the side of the ship must have brought vividly home to the sailors on that lovely Sabbath morning the peace and joy which comes to those who live for others! He reasoned once more with them, showed them their folly, proved the sincerity of his intentions by telling them of the vast numbers he had 'benefited' and for the last time begged them to take the 25 dollars and be saved from the horrors of 'lying up' with probably little or no liberty or leave to go on shore for months. It was of no avail. The men were obdurate and told him he might as well go over the side of the ship, and that he was at liberty to dwell in a warm place.

This was too much! It was insult added to injury. To refuse 25 dollars! a sailor! what had the world come to? The boarding-master lost his temper, his rocker became deranged. The philanthropist departed and the tiger took his place. In his wrath at being foiled for a month and altogether, he did the worst thing he could have done under the circumstances: he produced a paper, which he showed to the sailors; on this paper were written down the names of every man in the forecastle, and opposite each name was the amount owing to each

man and also the amount he—the boarding-master—was to get for every man he lured out of the ship, and told them the 'job' had been *put into his hands to get the men out of the ship.*

The writer was intimately acquainted with every man on the ship, saw them every day, and was made aware of everything that was going on. The men very soon saw they were being 'run out,' and the writer urged them frequently on no account to leave the ship. On the Sunday mentioned above, eight or nine of the seamen came up in the evening to the Seamen's Institute, a place they frequently came to, and after service those men in a body came and told the writer how that morning the boarding-master had lost his temper when they would not leave the ship, and had shown them the paper previously mentioned and told them the job had been put into his hands to get them out of the ship. No evidence could be clearer than this, and it is scarcely necessary to ask the question who commissioned the boarding-master to try and get the men to desert, as whoever did it knew the amount owing to each man.

Remarkable things are done sometimes in

trying to 'run men out.' On the — which arrived from England after a five months' passage, the sailors were forbidden to set foot on shore during the time the ship was discharging cargo, but the apprentices were allowed to go on shore as usual. The ship happened to be moored alongside a very safe wharf, and it is invariably the case when a ship is alongside the wharves discharging or loading that with the exception of a few who may be kept on board each night, the rest may go ashore at will when the day's work is over, and if any are kept on board they take it turn about with the rest. To order a whole crew of seamen after a five months' voyage not to go ashore when they reached port and the ship was moored safely at the wharf was simply a piece of ridiculous tyranny done for one obvious reason. Moreover the sailors were informed that if they had actually the 'presumption' to go ashore against orders two days' pay would be taken for each evening on shore; which fine can be legally enforced, being used, of course, in cases when men go ashore in the daytime during work hours without permission, when it is perfectly right and proper to fine them. In this case, however, these poor fellows worked hard on

the ship from early in the morning till the evening, so why should they be punished for wanting to go ashore in the evening, when the crews of every other ship along the wharves were all enjoying that very natural and well-earned privilege? These particular sailors, however, were forbidden to go ashore. The ship was lying in a most filthy spot, which is simply a sewer, where the water is black with sewage, and the stench at low tide abominable. Their detention was not only hard but unhealthy, as to get two or three hours each evening at any rate in fresh and good air is almost necessary to preserve health in such places.

For a time the men remained on board, and then got so enraged that they went ashore in the evenings without permission, and careless as to whether they would be fined or not. This was too much; they must be coerced. One of the sailors had been, as is usually the case, acting as night watchman of the ship. He was taken off this duty and a 'special' policeman was hired to act as night watchman. It was told the sailors, although of course we know it was only 'bluff,' that he was going to shoot any man that went ashore without leave. However, it was

privately made known to the men that any of them seen getting over the side of the ship carrying their bags of clothing, etc., which of course meant deserting, *would not be shot*.

This ridiculous farce did not drive the men from the ship. The 'policeman' only stayed two or three nights, as he was too expensive to be kept longer, and then departed. The 'bluff' had been tried and failed. The sailors remained by the ship and went home in her. They actually had the 'audacity' to think that, having signed articles for the whole voyage and to receive wages for the same, they would fulfil their agreement to the end and receive all the wages they had earned. This was their offence!

As these things are done on certain ships and by insidious means, laws should be enacted, and men should sign articles about regulations as to pocket-money, tailor, sending money home, etc., so that at any rate certain means which are used at times to 'run men out' should not be within the power of any master or owner—however few there may be of them who do these things—to apply.

It is a notorious fact that such work as 'running men out' of ships is done at the

close of the nineteenth century. A lieutenant in the naval reserve informed the writer that he was an officer on a ship which came to San Francisco, and which was going to 'lie up.' He was informed that the rule of that particular ship was, under the circumstances of lying up, that none of the crew who voyaged to the port in her should leave the port in the same vessel. If they did he might as well quit the ship himself, *i.e.*, they were to be run out.

On another vessel which was to 'lie up,' the chief officer asked the captain if he intended to pay the men off. His reply, with much emphasis, was, 'I never pay men off in a foreign port.' But the crew left the ship, all the same.

Another officer, remarking that he had been quietly told to get the men out of the ship, also said the officers should not be blamed on such ships, which in another sense are the counterpart of the coffin ships of a few years ago, as if they did not obey they would have shortly to find other berths for themselves.

Nor can captains always be blamed for ordering or allowing such work to be done, which has been evidenced by letters in the

Morning Post this year. A ship which arrived recently in Liverpool, after a voyage of fourteen or fifteen months, had during that period called at several ports, finally sailing from San Francisco home. The writer went on board and found the second mate, who remarked during conversation that they had had three crews on board since leaving England, and the only one paid off was that which brought the ship from San Francisco to Liverpool. The others had deserted, and then he said, with a queer smile and knowing look in his eye : ' You see, they have to work on this ship.'

The writer was well aware what he meant. On coming ashore he met the captain, with whom he was well acquainted, and, after some conversation, remarked :

' I suppose your sailors ran away in Frisco ?'

' Yes,' was the reply ; ' we've had three crews this voyage.'

Now, that ship had been fourteen or fifteen months on the voyage. A month's advance had been paid from England, and the crew, except two, ran away in a colonial port. A month's advance was paid from that port, and the crew, except the faithful two, deserted in San Francisco, and the voyage home lasted

five months, wages being £4 a month. The wages of the whole crew were then paid for seven months out of a voyage of fourteen or fifteen months, in addition to the saving effected from not having to feed the crew whilst in port. Undoubtedly, there is considerable profit to shipowners in a voyage of this kind, and unless it was so no efforts would be made on any ship to do other than keep the crew on the ship, much less attempt to 'run them out.'

Whether profit is made by someone out of the wages sacrificed by deserting seamen in other parts of the world the writer knows not, but on the Pacific Coast it most certainly in many an instance has been the case.

CHAPTER IX.

OTHER MATTERS.

WHEN ships are 'laid up' in San Francisco Bay, there are generally a number of sailors on board who have not deserted. Perhaps they don't get the chance to be paid off, and if they do they may elect to remain where they are, as it generally turns out a bad thing for a sailor to be paid off in a distant and foreign seaport, especially when the Board of Trade is not there to look after his interests. These men who stay by the ship go to 'lie up' in Mission Bay, Oakland Creek, Sausalito, or Martinez for from four to twelve months, and they lie within a few hundred yards of the shore in, as nearly as possible, complete safety. The weather, for the most part of the year, is very fine in San Francisco. Strong gales are not common, and very seldom occur except in winter, and it is not a difficult

matter to tell when a blow is coming on. In Oakland Creek ships lie safe and fast on the mud. In Sausalito a number lie on the mud, and the bay is most safe and quiet. In Mission Bay they lie well out of the way of shipping, as at Martinez, and the danger of collision, except in dense fogs, which are not common, is practically nil, whilst the risk of 'dragging' only happens when a very strong breeze gets up. There are scores of days and evenings throughout the year so calm and peaceful that there is no more danger to ships lying where they do than to houses built on land.

During the weary period of 'laying up' the ship, the majority of captains give the apprentices a very fair amount of liberty on shore. They have not, on many ships, any ground for complaint on that score, though there are ships on which they are kept on board, and forbidden all liberty, for months, in a manner which is simply cruel. It is mainly, however, to the seamen who may remain by the ships that reference is made. There are captains who give the men as well as the apprentices a fair share of liberty; but the majority give sailors, when the ship is 'laid up,' hardly any shore-leave whatever.

Witness one ship lying on the mud, not 200 yards from the shore, in a safe and quiet bay, and in seven months the men were allowed to set foot on shore *twice*! Numbers of ships 'laid up' keep men on board two months without allowing them on shore.

Why, on fine Sundays, which is the case with *most* Sundays in the year in California, should not half the men be allowed on shore each week, or take it in turn with the apprentices? There is no danger. If there is the chance of a blow or a fog, it is an easy matter to keep all hands by the ship. If any go on shore and misconduct themselves, it is likewise a very simple thing to stop their liberty the next time. But, as a rule, men who remain with a ship when she 'lies up' are generally steady, and behave themselves on shore. Allowing them reasonable liberty when the ship is in a safe place, and the weather fine, only tends to do one thing, and that is to make them more contented. Lying for two or three months within a few hundred yards of the shore, and scarcely allowed to set foot on it, only tends also in one direction, and that is to increase discontent, and unnecessarily so, because on the majority of Sundays, if there are four or six men on

board as well as apprentices, there is no reason whatever why half should not spend Sunday on shore.

Then, again, working men of nearly all classes in Great Britain get, in addition to Sunday, a half-holiday on Saturday as well. Why should this not be extended to all ships which 'lie up,' often for long months, not only in San Francisco, but also in Calcutta and other ports?

When a ship is along the wharves discharging or loading cargo, it is usually impossible for a half-holiday to be given on Saturday, because stevedores, etc., work all day, and the crew have to clean up after they have finished. But when a ship has *done* discharging, and gone to 'lie up' in some bay, the case is different. Why should not every man and boy on every ship knock off work at 12 o'clock, and have, like his brothers in Great Britain, a half-holiday? What objections can there be?

You may be told, 'There is a lot of work to be done on the ship, and we must get through with it; she's got to be chipped inside and out, and painted, and goodness knows what else, so we can't give them a half-holiday.'

Why do not the same remarks apply to those employers of labour in England who have large and very important orders for work on their hands to be completed very speedily? Why don't they advance the same plea to their workmen? Simply because they cannot do it, as the workman will have his Saturday afternoon for football or cricket, racing pigeons, rabbit-coursing, etc., and they have it. Surely the chipping of a ship—a necessary but mournful task—the cleaning of the limbers, and painting the vessel, is not more important or pressing than the large orders for work at home which have to be speedily executed? Yet the one workman gets his half-holiday, and the other does not.

It is all very well to observe that 'there is a lot of work to be done on the ship and it must be got through,' but the writer has often observed that if the ship 'lies up' a number of months and the work is all done or easily in hand, even then no thought of a Saturday half-holiday is conceived, but additional work is found.

There are, of course, certain ships which give the men part of Saturday afternoons, but it should be a regulation that when ships 'lie up' their crews knock off work at the

same time that the men in all the great works at home do so.

What effect would this have on men and boys on ships which 'lie up'? It would again only make them more content and give them greater zest for work during the week. 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.' Moreover, it is only a very fair and reasonable concession to make.

Whilst dealing with the subject we must mention another thing, which, although only done on a certain number of ships, is yet simply a piece of tyranny and unnecessary work. We refer to certain ships making the apprentices get up and work from 6 to 8 a.m. on Sunday morning cleaning brass-work on deck. In the first place Sunday in port at any rate should be a day of rest, except, of course, in so far as there is necessary work which has to be done. But is cleaning brass-work, which no doubt they have been cleaning several times in the week, an urgent and necessary piece of work? The apprentices have probably 'turned out' each week-day morning at 5.30 a.m. or 6 a.m. and have worked till nearly 6 p.m. at night, without a thought of a Saturday half-day off, and they naturally look forward with real pleasure to being able to 'lay in' on Sunday

morning. Why, then, in Heaven's name must the apprentices on *any* ship which flies the British flag be dragged out of bed on Sunday morning at 6 a.m. in port to do a job which is entirely unnecessary?

Why should a few men try to dash a good deal of happiness and contentment out of some young lives that they happen to have in their power, by making them do an utterly unnecessary bit of work on the Sabbath morning, instead of allowing them to lie in bed a few hours later after a week of toil?

CHAPTER X,

ALLOTMENT NOTES.

ON the very long voyages which the large sailing-ships, coming to the Pacific coast and elsewhere, make, it is a very great hardship to men *before the mast* that they cannot *generally*, but only in *exceptional* cases, leave an allotment note on their wages at home, by which their wives, parents, or others dependent on them, can draw part of their pay each month they are away, which, as has been stated, is frequently a period of one to three years. Officers and petty officers are frequently allowed to do this, but not usually men *before the mast*. The reason is simply that shipowners might be continuing to pay the money to the holder of the note some time after the man had deserted the ship somewhere, or died at sea, and ceased to be a wage-earner. This is perfectly reasonable,

but still it is such an excessive hardship on many needy relations at home that some arrangement by which men could remit money they had earned from distant ports to their friends ought to be arranged, and might easily be managed.

If through the chance of death at sea or desertion abroad the sailor before the mast cannot be permitted to leave 'half-pay' at home, surely one of two courses might be adopted on these long-voyage ships which would at any rate greatly alleviate the present state of things.

The first is that those at home could draw half-pay each month the ship is at sea, the payment to cease on the ship's *arrival* in a port and during her stay there, and to be continued after the ship has sailed, with payment of arrears on *receipt* of the captain's letter that the seamen leaving the 'half-pay' note at home had not deserted.

The second course is not to leave an allotment note for monthly payments, but on the *termination* of each stay in a port to allow the seaman to remit home what he wishes of the wages he has earned, to be paid on receipt of a letter from the captain that he has not deserted. The ship is starting on a

new voyage and the man is going to earn fresh wages, so there is no risk to the shipowner if he deserted at another port, as he has again wages earned as security. In the case of those hundreds of ships which come straight home from the Pacific, there is, of course, no risk whatever, as the man cannot desert.

This system would at any rate enable those needing help at home to receive money every few months instead of at a period of one to three years as at present. How much more ready would this make men with relations dependent on them to sail on a long-voyage ship!

The shipowners may say, 'What is to prevent a man deserting his ship at the last moment after the money has been sent?' The answer is that if the man did desert at the last moment, which is most improbable, and certainly in San Francisco impossible, the captain has merely got to send a note home, and the payment, or as much of it as is necessary, can be stopped.

Practically all British ships when loaded lie out in San Francisco Bay for two or three days getting 'cleared.' During this time a special watchman is on board from the shore

with a loaded revolver, and it is so far impossible for men to desert then that the writer in five years never heard of one doing so. What risk then to the shipowner?

It is also said that these men on sailing-ships before the mast are for the most part unmarried. Granted that a great many of them are, does it necessarily follow therefore that they have only themselves to keep? Are there not mothers, fathers, sisters to help? Of course there are, as the writer knows right well; for out of a sum of about £1,300 referred to elsewhere brought to him last year by these same sailors, he sent home about £1,000 to those who were either dependent upon or being helped by their sons, brothers, or husbands at sea.

What a scandal that some such scheme as has been indicated has not long since been thought out and acted upon, not in a few ships, but in *every* sailing-ship! What hardship, hunger, cold, and suffering has been brought to many a struggling person at home by this great omission! Whilst, more terrible still, how many sailors' wives and daughters have been in consequence driven on to the streets to earn a livelihood!

CHAPTER XI.

PAYING MEN OFF.

AT certain times and for certain reasons a number of men are occasionally paid off from British ships in San Francisco. The men, as previously stated, sign articles for the voyage 'out and home,' or to be paid off at the end of three years if the ship is away so long. The shipowner, at any rate, in reckoning the expense of a voyage, should reckon on paying wages to a *whole* crew for from twelve to eighteen months, and even for a longer period when ships get to very distant places.

Every now and then ships have to 'lie up' for a number of months, and it is manifestly to the interest of the shipowner to pay off those of his men who have not deserted, if they will leave the ship, instead of keeping them on board earning wages and eating food whilst the ship is earning nothing.

The wages paid to sailors from England out to San Francisco on these ships are from £2 10s. to £2 15s. a month, although it ought not to be less than £3 5s. to £3 10s. in justice to the work and the kind of life and food the sailors often have to put up with.

The wages paid to sailors who are shipped on board at San Francisco (if the original crew have deserted) to bring the ship home are £4 a month, so there is an increase of £1 5s. a month on the wages paid from England. It is therefore manifestly not to the interests of the shipowners to pay a crew off with wages at the rate of £2 15s. a month, and immediately ship another at a higher rate of wages, viz., £4 a month.

When ships have to 'lie up' for some time waiting for cargoes, those sailors on board of them who have not deserted are sometimes given the option of being paid off in San Francisco, instead of waiting till the vessel arrives home and the voyage is ended. This is a perfectly fair and legal act, only when they are paid off before the completion of the voyage for which they signed articles, it must be by a mutual agreement between the master and the men. If they agree to this, it must also be remembered it is considered

a 'privilege' to allow them to have their wages in a foreign port, and they must, in consideration of this, leave behind a part of their pay equal to the difference of wages, from £2 15s. to £4, for the voyage home, which will have to be paid for men to take their places. Consequently, when sailors are occasionally paid off in San Francisco, they all have to relinquish one, or two, and sometimes three months' wages for the 'expenses' of their successors.

It is very seldom that ships arriving in San Francisco from long voyages leave the port again in less time than two months. There is a necessary delay of discharging, loading, etc., and the shipowner calculates this delay of two months or more in the ordinary estimates of the ship's expenses and the wages of the crew for the voyage. We will take the case of a ship which remains in port two months and does not 'lie up,' on which a man having wages at the rate of £2 15s. a month is paid off when she comes in. He has to leave one or two months' pay behind him in order to get paid off. If he remained by the ship during the two months she was in port, he would earn £5 10s.; so if he is paid off when the ship comes in,

this is a lessening of the wages to be paid, calculated on by the shipowner, of £5 10s., in addition to the two months' saving in food for him, which must amount to something.

What are the expenses of a man to succeed our friend who has been paid off? The wages 'out of' San Francisco on deep-water ships are £4. The average voyage home is from four to five months, not unfrequently less. Making a voyage of four months at £2 15s. a month, this means £11 in wages per able seaman. At £4 a month, it amounts to £16 a man, an excess of £5. Now that there is no 'blood-money' to be paid, the only other expense incurred by shipowners who have contracts with shipping-masters is that they have to pay 4s. 2d. for each man supplied to their ships.

But the saving to the shipowners of the two months' wages in port after the man has left, which the shipowner must have calculated upon paying (as the sailor signed articles for the *whole* voyage, out and home), *covers the extra wages to be paid*; so why should not men be paid off with *all* their wages? It is merely fair and just.

When ships lie up many months, which they often do, there is no reason whatever

why a sailor who wished to be paid off should be forced to leave one or two months of his wages behind him. Yet it is almost always the case.

That a crew can be paid off with every cent that is owing them, and the shipowner lose nothing, can be proved by the fact that not long ago the crew of the large four-master, —, were paid off in San Francisco, and no deduction at all was made to cover the 'expenses' of extra men. She was an excellent ship—one of those vessels the sailors call a 'home.' For some months the vessel lay in the bay, and eventually accepted a freight. The sailors who had been paid off had spent those months sailing on the Pacific coasting vessels, and when she was ready for sea every man—the original crew—rejoined her, and made the voyage to England. The shipowner lost nothing, nor did the captain, and they had a crew who were a contented and capital lot of seamen.

Whether men are paid off or not at odd times in San Francisco, yet on one point many people agree—viz., that it would be a great mistake to pay off every crew in each port of arrival, according to the American system.

CHAPTER XII.

APPRENTICES AND DESERTION.

GREAT as are the evils attending the desertion of sailors, far greater are those resulting to apprentices when they desert ships. These boys come to sea with the express purpose of becoming officers in the Mercantile Marine. Large numbers of them are well-born and well-educated young fellows. Their parents fit them out at considerable expense for the voyage, and usually a premium is paid the shipowners in consideration of their taking them for three or four years as 'bound apprentices.' Very often the parents are by no means well off in this world's riches, and it is with no little stinting of their own comforts that they can fit their son out, and keep him well supplied with the necessaries of sea life during his apprenticeship. This thought—the thought of a great debt to

parents—should ever be a controlling and steadying one to an apprentice.

However, we have now to do with their desertion. It is a fact that apprentices do desert in places and at times in considerable numbers, and we will now inquire into some of the main causes which induce them to do so. One is that the change from the imagination of a sea life, with its bold romance and its wild freedom, its adventure, and seeing all parts of the world, to the *reality* of what life on board ship actually is, is a sudden and tremendous one.

The British boy is smitten with stories of splendid deeds and marvellous adventure, so well told by many a writer. His mind is easily drawn to such a theme, and perhaps his eye rests on the sturdy frame and brown, sun-tanned features of some apprentice, resplendent in his neat dark clothes and brass buttons, just home from a long voyage, with the intense joy of being home once more reflected in every feature of his countenance, with trials and troubles all forgotten, and only the good things remembered. When a boy, with his mind full of the sea and its stories, sets eye upon this living example of the 'splendours' of a life on the ocean wave,

in less time than it takes to write, the eye and the mind agree that this is *the* life for a young fellow—the one life worth living. The mind is fixed upon it, and no doubt shortly afterwards he signs his indentures, and is apprenticed to some firm.

On coming to sea, the first and greatest blow which apprentices receive on too many ships, and which goes far within a week to take the edge off their keen enthusiasm for their chosen profession, is the change from home to sea food. This has already been spoken about, but it disheartens and knocks half the life out of them, when a more liberal and varied provision would keep them contented, and able to stand with a good heart the cold and wet, and hard knocks attendant upon a sea life.

Then they have signed articles to be taught navigation, and helped on in learning their work, and many of them expect and wish it. Yet although this is part of the agreement made with the owners, and a plain duty towards boys wishing to be officers, it may well be asked, Does one captain in forty offer to teach his boys navigation when they get to sea?

Granted that a certain number of boys on

ships are difficult to deal with—are impertinent and have to be ruled strictly—yet anyone who has had dealings with apprentices knows well that there are any number of splendid young fellows amongst them—as manly and noble-hearted as one could wish to find—who are willing and anxious to be taught, and also to try and live steady lives. The writer remembers well with what pleasure and real gratitude to the captain the apprentices on a large four-masted ship in San Francisco last year told him they were taken regularly into the cabin all the time they were at sea, and instructed in navigation. This was right and proper, only, unfortunately, it is the exception, and not the rule. Why should it not be the *rule* on all ships carrying boys who intend to be officers?

Possibly, as is indeed the case with many, the apprentice has strong religious instincts when he comes to sea. He has been brought up in a good family, and his early training is deeply rooted in his mind. He comes on board ship sincerely anxious and prepared to do what he believes to be right. He feels and honestly feels, as thousands do in all ranks of life, if they speak the truth, that his welfare in life, his character, in fact

everything, depends on his trying to do his duty, so far as he knows it, to the living God. But for many a long month he must now be deprived of the assistance which in his youthful years has made such an impression on his better nature. It will be long before he hears the inspiring sounds of the deep-toned organ, and the voices of choirs and congregations singing the grand old English hymns. No clergyman's voice will be heard for many a long day, none of the encouraging and moderating influences of a good home will be felt probably where he is going.

We are wrong in saying the influence of a good home will not be felt. They cannot actually be with him it is true, but in every part of the world does the influence of a good home, with its tender associations and purifying affections, make itself powerfully felt on the characters of boys and young men who love their homes and those who dwell in them, and many a lad is encouraged to persevere in most discouraging circumstances and surroundings simply by constantly recalling to mind his home.

There can be no question that young people especially want encouraging to try and keep in the right path. What encour-

agement is found on board deep-water ships? Does one ship in forty ever have prayers or the Bible read on Sunday during the months they spend at sea? Few indeed are those ships where the name of God is publicly revered. Many indeed are those where that name is only heard when taken in vain. All persons are more or less influenced by their surroundings, and we know how many there are in this world who are very easily led indeed, however good their intentions may be. If some young and reverently minded boy is suddenly thrust amidst surroundings on board ship where all he has been taught to hold in reverence is put to one side, unless he is of exceptional strength and character he will feel their influence to his hurt.

Chaplains follow the army and navy wherever they go, and men and boys are bound to attend religious services, no doubt with an excellent effect on their general conduct. Surely, then, it would be an enormous gain to men and boys if all captains of ships who could control their language outside and generally live properly—and there are plenty who are doing this—would at any rate read prayers and the Bible regularly on Sundays. Some of the men on the ship would be sure

to come, and the apprentices would come, and indeed if very few of the men did so, it matters not: a good influence comes on a ship, which is reflected throughout the vessel, when prayers are reverently read and God is more than a name. The writer has been told that on Russian ships it is the universal custom for daily service to be conducted by the captain.

Few, comparatively speaking, are these ships in the British merchant service, but there are notable exceptions to a wrong state of things. There are ships commanded by most godly men—not fanatics, but truly Christian men—whose quiet and moderating influence can be truly felt, on whose ships peace, so far as possible, reigns, where ordinary cursing and blaspheming are put down with a firm hand. Such ships, living witnesses of what a good man can do by firmness and kindness based on religion amongst his men and apprentices, are afloat to-day, where the sailors are content and truly respect the captain. Unhappily, however, they are not the majority; but the system which produces peace on these ships is strongly at variance with the opinion of certain officers who strongly maintain that

nothing can be done with a sailor unless you call him, to begin with, all sorts of names, and if that does not reduce him to law and order, vary the calling of names at intervals by a few private boxing matches—without gloves.

On those ships where God is revered, apprentices and sailors have their highest aspirations in every way encouraged, and in many a case with the result of a successful and steady career afterwards.

What with monotony and the stern realities of a long voyage many a boy is saying in his heart when he reaches port that if he can get a job ashore he will quit the ship, and others are saying they will quit, job or no job, and get along somehow.

Landing in San Francisco, they are dazzled, after their long absence from society, by the sights and sounds of the great city, the gaiety of the people, the beautiful climate and marvellous display in the streets of Californian fruit, by the perpetual talk about dollars and visionary jobs, to be had for the asking, of 40, 50, and 100 dollars a month, and the apparently high spirits of everybody—all these things appeal to apprentices.

Then a number of them at any rate are

met by men up town, well dressed, with excellent manners, and apparently no lack of dollars, who make their acquaintance casually and as it were by chance, insinuate themselves into their confidence by their courteous and pleasant manners and offer to 'show them round.' This 'showing round' proves to be taking them to see the vilest places and most immoral streets in the city, 'treating' them, and generally doing their best to show them the 'advantages' and 'pleasures' of commencing early a licentious life. They are thousands of miles from home. No one knows them or cares what they do here, they had far better have a 'good time,' they are told, now they have the chance. Men who take apprentices round in this manner and try to get hold of them for the vilest aims exist, and it is very much to the interest of self-respecting apprentices to give the cold shoulder to every man who may address them in the streets of any strange seaport, and to have nothing whatever to do with such persons unless they know who they are.

It is a strange thing in human nature that amongst very large numbers of young fellows it is considered a manly thing to see all the worst things that can be seen, and to taste some

of the licentious pleasures which the world proffers to them ; and unfortunately men such as we have been mentioning sometimes find a ready response to their proffered ' kindness ' and ' hospitality.' Still, whether they are disposed to go astray or not, here is a gay city, with crowded streets and elegant shop-windows, and any amount of cheap and even free amusements, and who can wonder that the change from a hard ship to the city seems like from hell to heaven ?

Boys and young men do not stop to think that behind much of this gaiety in the lower parts of the town there is a canker-worm, that the apparent happiness they notice in the people who speak to them, and in the lower places of amusement, is not that which comes from good living, but profligacy. They do not conjecture, of course they cannot know, how many of those they now think so highly favoured will in a few years have died by their own hand ; for a fast and headlong life of profligacy only brings men to ruin, and in vast numbers in the States to suicide. They do not realize how shiftily is the life of men who live by odd jobs, and especially those who apparently take such keen interest in sailors and apprentices.

Till six years ago apprentices came to San Francisco, the great majority knowing no one, with no good place of amusement, no rooms in which they could sit and smoke and have comfort which did not reek with temptation. Wandering the streets all the evening, getting into bad company, nightly visits to low streets and cheap hells were the rule with many a one, whilst drinking and profligacy ensued too often. They got disgusted with themselves, ashamed, reckless, and listened eagerly to stories about jobs, gold mines, work on the coast, tug-boats and a host of other things. There were very few counteracting influences, and the result was that these young fellows—plenty of whom, if reasonable care and interest had been taken in them on arrival, would have remained the sturdy examples of British manhood they gave every promise to become—deserted their ships in scores and became the prey of the evil life which infests the lower quarters of San Francisco.

Another cause that makes towards desertion amongst apprentices has, without doubt, to do with feminine members of society. Sailors are naturally impressionable, and the youthful heart—and not only the youthful,

but the elder one also—is very much affected by the sight of petticoats after none have been seen for a quarter to half a year. Perhaps not only sailors, but all sorts and conditions of men might be affected in a like manner under similar circumstances. Suffice it to say that a number of sturdy young fellows are very easily subdued by some bright glances from pretty eyes as they walk along the streets, or go into some public-house, in the colonies or elsewhere.

No doubt the ladies feel themselves genuinely attracted by some smart, well-dressed apprentice in his neat uniform, and this same young gentleman very soon believes himself to be wildly in love, and visions of a Robinson Crusoe existence on some desert island with the object of adoration flits before his mind. The young lady much encourages this or other similar schemes, and cannot bear that the young man should ever go back in the ship, and be away from her side. A few tender entreaties soon overcome the all-too-willing victim, and he vows, come what may, he will never leave her. The usual profuse promises take place, and the young man gets his things, if he can manage it, quietly packed and brought from

the ship, and slips ashore some time during the night—not much prior to the ship's sailing, so that there is not much time for the authorities to try and find him—and seeks the side of the object of his devotion. An apprentice usually tries to desert at the last moment, as efforts are sometimes made to get him back on board the ship; but with the sailors it is different. They—at any rate, in San Francisco—know right well no effort will be made to capture them.

The ship sails, and he is most surely left behind and free. A week or so passes, and the Robinson Crusoe bud does not appear to be going to blossom; it does not, upon consideration, appear so easy of attainment. Another week or so passes; something *must* be done. The jobs described by the lady as so numerous and lucrative are not seemingly at hand; everything seems filled up. Moreover, soon after his leaving the ship, a more serious thing happened—he had cut the brass buttons off his coat, and taken the badge off his cap, and looked like an ordinary citizen. Strange to say, this had a most disappointing effect on the fair one; she did not seem somehow to like this change from a sailor bold and free to an ordinary commonplace lands-

man. As days passed on, this coolness seemed to develop, and proportionately the life-on-a-desert-island scheme began to fade. Moreover, it was necessary to maintain life, and that required food, and a bed was also wanted at night, and the young man's finances had collapsed—in fact, he had reached a condition which is often described as 'dead broke.'

Some of his clothes had now to go to the pawn-shop, his watch, and other things; and yet nothing turned up. Some days he could not get his boots blacked, nor have a clean collar; and it was all very sad.

The truth, however, must be spoken: the bright young member of the gentler sex had steadily cooled down since the buttons were taken off, and the fresh brown tan of exposure to the sea began to disappear, and she suddenly failed to meet him at the accustomed hour. He thought it was a mistake, but it was not, nor could he get any answer to imploring letters; and one night the horrid fears which tormented the poor fellow were realized, as, walking along the street in anything but smart attire and with a generally unkempt appearance, he saw the young lady walking along with the same coquettish air which had

brought him into the toils, whilst by her side was a fresh, good-looking young fellow off some ship, looking radiant in the midst of her smiles and bright glances. *He had his brass buttons and badge-cap on.*

Alas for our poor boy ! He realized all too late that he had been 'loved' for his appearance, and not for what he was, and that the 'next one' is every bit as good so long as he retains his neat uniform and looks nice. Many are the promising young apprentices who have deserted their ships for some young flirt, and have found out all too late the fatal mistake they have made ; for it is a most serious thing in the life of an apprentice if he deserts his ship. It is serious to his prospects, because if he has served as much as three years of his 'time,' and then deserts, the Board of Trade do not allow him to count the years served as part of the four years' service which has to be gone through before going up for the examination for second mate. He has, therefore, practically to begin again, and not many have the nerve and determination to do this ; it is almost equivalent to throwing away two or three years of his life.

Not only does it most seriously affect his own prospects, but it is a misfortune very

often to his parents, if they don't happen to be very well-to-do people. They have fitted him out at considerable expense, and have paid or guaranteed a premium for their son to the owners of the ship for taking him. If he deserts, they may be called upon to pay the premium of £20 to £40, which is too often a very serious tax upon their means. In addition, there is the intense disappointment to them at their son making such a fatal mistake in the commencement practically of his chosen career.

There can be no question that a very large number of apprentices who desert become 'rolling stones,' and by that one thoughtless act of desertion ruin their lives. Here and there one succeeds in getting a good place on shore and prospers; but it cannot be too strongly impressed upon apprentices that those who succeed are vastly the exception, and the great majority go utterly to the wall. Moreover, a great many of them, unable to get work, restless in mind about having done wrong to themselves and their parents, get depressed and miserable almost beyond belief. They too often sink into hopeless poverty, and probably are finally picked up by some crimp and put on a ship,

and £8, if he can be smuggled in as an A.B., is taken as his price.

Not only do many sink into utter misery and destitution, but there are also some who come to a terrible end. Many sailors will remember that beautiful evening in May, at Martinez near San Francisco, that two fishing-boats were seen at dusk barely a mile from seventeen British ships lying at anchor in the bay. They did not think that in one of those boats were — off the — and — off the —, two deserting apprentices, whilst following them in hot pursuit in his boat was a murderous Greek. Only one thought possessed this man, to kill the two Englishmen, and by his side lay his Winchester rifle loaded and ready for use. Nothing further was seen, and what ensued when the dreadful deed was committed will never be known. Suffice it to say that the Greek told other Greeks that he had shot the poor young fellows, lashed their bodies to their boat and sunk it. The body of one was afterwards recovered with the skull smashed and otherwise injured. The murderer was never arrested.

Some will recollect the fate of three apprentices placed on whalers bound for the

Arctic, but they never returned. They died on board. Many also recollect a fine young fellow who deserted the ship —, and after picking up odd jobs in San Francisco for a year or so went up to some mines about 100 miles from the city, and a few weeks after getting there was brutally shot and murdered. His last words just before he died were, 'Tell the boys to give Sullivan (the man who shot him) a fair trial.' One of the last things the writer did in San Francisco was to visit an apprentice who deserted the —; he had heard by chance that the lad was dying in a country hospital in the great San Joaquin Valley. For eighteen months after he left the ship he had wandered up and down, picking up an odd job here and there, and enduring the greatest privations. Finally, he went to dig clams in the muddy creeks, truly a last resort, and caught a cold which brought on the worst form of tuberculosis. He had managed to get into this hospital, and there, amongst strangers and thousands of miles from his home, he passed beyond the veil. He told the writer how bitterly he regretted leaving his ship, and related to him the reasons why he had left; and when men are lying face to face with certain death it is not

supposed that they are telling lies, unless they are criminals of the most hardened type.

Many another case could be given of the great misery that comes too often to the apprentices who desert, and their very real regret that they ever took the step. Of the apprentices who deserted during the five years the writer spent among seamen in San Francisco, he only knows of one who prospered. Several of the others died miserable deaths, others sank into saloons, tobacco stores, and other places, whilst a number got places as conductors on the street cars, and spent the time which should have been occupied in learning their profession in collecting 5-cent car fares. The writer well remembers walking along Kearny Street one morning and seeing two bootblacks making signs of recognition. They were two deserting apprentices who had been reduced to blacking boots to try and gain a livelihood. It could hardly be said that their prospects in life had improved.

Look at it how we will, desertion is a very serious thing to great numbers of sailors, and to a very large number of apprentices it is little less than a fatal blow to their prospects in life. Nothing but a vigorous campaign

amongst them in a place like San Francisco is of any avail, continually warning them of the consequences, pointing out clearly and strongly what in all probability awaits them, and explaining the lying nature of the reports they hear of jobs, etc., told them by self-seeking and iniquitous men up town. The parents and friends of apprentices and all young sailors, whether apprentices or not, should spare no efforts in endeavouring to get introductions for them in strange seaports.

To know friends in the port of arrival, or have some house in which he is welcome, is the saving of many a young man from the commencement of a loose and unsuccessful career. Moreover, friends who are truly friends will on no account hear of an apprentice deserting his ship. They will use every influence against it.

Thanks to the kindness of a number of ladies in San Francisco, and in Oakland across the bay in recent years, many a young fellow has now got friends in these places, in whose houses he is welcome, and where he finds good company and genuine hospitality, instead of merely having the streets in which to spend the evening, as was the case with too many formerly.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEAMEN'S INSTITUTE.

It had long been felt that some definite work of not only a religious but also a social nature was greatly needed amongst the long-voyage sailors who landed in San Francisco after being months at sea, and were there exposed, as has been explained, to very great temptation. For some years past the episcopal clergy in San Francisco had asked the sailors to church, but having large and busy parishes on their hands, were quite unable to devote much time to this work, and they were amongst the first to say how little they could really do. What was wanted was a work which should not only relate to coming to church on Sundays, but also make provision for comfort and rational amusement during the six week evenings.

Reasonable persons understand that people

living on shore, with their homes, society, and amusements all around them, have everything to make them pass the week-day evenings pleasantly, and many of them go to church on Sundays as the right and proper thing to do; but with sailors in a strange city the case is different. They need something else besides a church. Why should sailors of all men be perpetually offered tracts and continual invitations on most week-days as well as Sundays to church? Landspeople are not troubled much in this way; why should sailors be? In addition to church on Sundays, what sailors wanted in a port like San Francisco were good comfortable rooms, where smoking, billiards, good concerts, and various other entertainments were held during the week. There have always been churches in San Francisco, and sailors, or certainly a number of them, have always been asked to church. But that did not exert a noticeable influence in checking, for instance, desertion amongst apprentices, nor did it check many men and boys frequenting nightly the dives and low resorts of the city. Why? Christianity dictates that if you are a stranger and receive an invitation to church on Sunday, that should also be followed up, as far as

people are able, by invitations of social hospitality and enjoyment during the week. This can only be accomplished in San Francisco by having a special place and work devoted entirely to the welfare of seamen. The clergy of San Francisco did all that was in their power, and no doubt there are many seamen who have felt gratitude to them for their efforts, but they were of course completely handicapped by the great amount of work in their own parishes.

A chapel and small reading-room for seamen conducted by the Congregationalists have been open for many years, and no doubt have done much good amongst a number of seamen, but their very strict rules regarding smoking and amusements of all kinds do not find much favour with large numbers of sailors and apprentices. They have done good work, no doubt, by directly religious influences ; yet by discountenancing games and amusements they have failed to provide, in the opinion of many, what is wanted in order to attract large numbers of young men from the streets and their allurements. However, the pastor and his assistant were always on excellent terms with the writer, and they thoroughly understood each

other's opinions, and mutually liked and respected one another.

Six years ago there was started a work on the lines which have been indicated. It was hoped and believed that at any rate a number of seamen and apprentices would avail themselves of its advantages, but the many difficulties and obstacles which stood in the way were well known from the first. A ship generally contains on a small scale the elements which comprise a parish on shore. There are those on board who cordially uphold any good work, there are also those who look coldly at, and do not understand, the objects of well-intentioned people, and there are usually one or two who openly sneer at any religion or any work connected with religion, whilst plenty will 'encourage' you, especially those in authority, by saying that all efforts to do good to sailors or in any way benefit them are vain—in fact, that sailors are passed beyond redemption.

There can be no question that there are ports in the world where every effort is made to screw money out of sailors for the support of the mission, and very little indeed is done for their comfort or enjoyment, which naturally is an encouragement to those who

are opposed to places of any religious character, however broad may be the lines on which they are conducted. At the same time, when men and apprentices see plainly that there is an excellent work being carried on for their benefit there need be no doubt that if asked they would willingly and liberally subscribe towards its maintenance. However, there are plenty of people in this world who, on seeing *one* work which does not appeal to them, are only too glad to avail themselves of this single opportunity to stoutly maintain that all others in any and every part of the world must be of the same sort.

Much more serious difficulties than any which are met with on board ships, by reason of the various opinions and ideas found there, were the cheap and attractive nature of the doubtful places of amusement up town, and the allurements of low streets, saloons, etc. Something honestly attractive and full of enjoyment had to be kept going with unfailing regularity if anything was to be done to counteract their influence even in a small degree. Sailors after a long voyage, during the few weeks they are in port, mean if possible to enjoy themselves, and no one can

blame them if they do. If they have not got money to go regularly to good places of amusement, and can only afford the cheapest and lowest, many will go there, unless something really excellent is provided for them elsewhere.

In almost every city and town in the civilized world men have, in addition to their homes, their clubs, their guilds, and various organizations where they can meet for social and other purposes. If men living on shore, surrounded by friends, society, and amusements, find it necessary to have such places, ten thousand times is it more a necessity that in every seaport town there should be a first-rate place well maintained for the thousands of sailors and apprentices who land there. For the most part these men are strangers in strange cities, with hordes of unprincipled men and women ever on the look-out for them, to rob them of their wages if paid off, and if not, to treat them in the approved fashion of the boarding masters' and crimps' association in San Francisco, Portland, Oregon, and other places.

To remedy to a certain extent a very real want, after some trouble in making the necessary arrangements, the Seamen's Institute

was opened on June 2, 1893. Two floors of a large building, situated most conveniently for the shipping along the wharves, were secured at a rental, to commence with, of £300 a year, which was dropped two years later to £250, a not inconsiderable sum in itself to be raised year by year. The top floor consisted of a large hall capable of accommodating hundreds of persons, whilst the lower floor was divided into several rooms, which were comfortably furnished and provided with billiard-tables, bagatelle and other games, whilst British and local newspapers, books, and writing material were also there. Smoking, of course, was permitted, and in fact there were no rules or regulations as to conduct, men and boys being free to do as they pleased. It is good to record that only on one or two occasions during a period of five years did anything occur that even the most fastidious could find fault with.

On Sundays service was held twice: the Holy Communion was celebrated in the morning, and there was evening service. During the week the rooms were open for any use the men might care to make of them in the way of games, writing, or reading, and it was hoped to be able to arrange a concert

on Tuesday nights and a social evening on Saturday.

The estimate of the number of sailors who might come to the Institute was so humble in the first place that the idea was to hold the weekly concerts in one of the rooms on the lower floor, but it was soon seen that this was reckoning below the mark, and they were regularly held in the large room upstairs capable of holding some 500 persons. Through the great kindness of many ladies and gentlemen, both American and English, in San Francisco, concerts were given with very few weeks' intermission with unfailing regularity during five years. Sometimes for nine months at a stretch never a week was missed, then generally each spring there would come a month or two when the ships along the wharves were so few in number that it was not worth while having one, but the greater part of the year there was little difficulty in getting a splendid audience of from one to three and sometimes four hundred sailors and apprentices, in addition to a very considerable number of ladies and others living in the city who felt a warm interest in the work and delighted to come there.

It was, of course, no easy matter to get up

concerts year after year, but thanks to kind friends this was accomplished. Every now and then there was what may be called a slack evening, but take it all through, the majority of those concerts were excellent, and many of them quite first-rate, which need not be wondered at, considering that a number of the leading musicians in the city, both amateur and professional, came down to assist.

The writer is convinced that many hundreds of sailors and numbers of residents in San Francisco will agree with him when he says that few more inspiring, more enthusiastic evenings could be spent than at many of these concerts in the Seamen's Institute. Scores of times has that hall been packed to excess with hundreds of well-dressed sailors and sturdy apprentices in their neat uniforms, greeting with rapturous applause the songs of the ladies and gentlemen — frequently tremendous thundering applause which would brook no denial of an encore. Then, always interspersed at intervals in the programme, were solos by picked sailors, many of whom could give excellent songs, generally with a chorus at the end of each verse, taken up by all the men present, making a volume of

sound which was very fine. With few exceptions every concert was closed by a number of sailors coming on the platform and singing a number of 'chanties,' real songs of the sea, in the chorus of which the audience joined.

No one who has heard these particular songs sung by large bodies of seamen could fail to be impressed with them. They are a true breath from the sea, and are a novelty to most landspeople. The ladies of San Francisco delighted to hear them, and once last year, by special request, some seventy seamen and apprentices sang them at the close of a very excellent concert given in one of the fashionable concert halls of the city in aid of the Institute. The hall was full of citizens of San Francisco, and they will not soon forget the splendid volume of sound, which came in perfect tune from the lips of those seventy sailors.

These concerts in the Institute not only gave pleasure to the audience, but also to the performers. They were the means of giving many people in San Francisco an entirely new idea of what a sailor was. Many who had lived under the impression that the sea was an absolutely last resort for the scum

of the human race—that sailors were a rough and most undesirable class of men—underwent a revulsion of feeling when they saw to their astonishment, instead of the rough element they expected, scores of seamen, well-dressed, well-conducted, and respectable in every sense of the word, and numbers of young fellows in their uniforms looking as smart as could be wished. On all these evenings—extending over several years, practically every week—the writer may fairly say that there was never any disorder, nor the least trouble with an audience which often went into the hundreds. Indeed, only once or twice had any remonstrance to be addressed to any of them. The behaviour of those sailors was as good as, and often better than that of an audience composed of ‘blue blood.’

On one evening a social entertainment was held to which a number of ladies came down. It consisted of games of various kinds, and songs by sailors. At the suggestion of a lady, a true friend to seamen, a tea was added to this affair, for which a small charge was made. This particular kind of evening grew very largely in popularity, and large numbers of men and boys came to it. They certainly enjoyed the liberal provision of food at the

end, appreciating it the more from the fact that they paid for it and it was not given free. This social evening was always held on Saturday, which was the day on which the sailors received their scanty weekly allowance of pocket-money. It is well worthy of notice that large numbers used to come and spend from seven to ten o'clock at the Institute, when many persons hotly contend that it is impossible to draw any sailors with money in their pockets to a Seamen's Institute, but that as soon as they get it they must go and spend it in an undesirable manner elsewhere. However, it is a well-known fact to the writer, and to many others in San Francisco, that large numbers both of sailors and apprentices spend this weekly 'fortune' in a very careful and proper manner.

Some little time after the Institute was opened, a third evening each week was added to the entertainments. This was called an 'athletic evening,' and it was held in the large hall used for concerts. It was usually a time of complete enjoyment, consisting of sack races, three-legged races, egg and spoon, blindfold, and lemon races, and concluding with tugs of war. The system on which several of these races were run was to place

a heavy sailor on a chair at one end of the room, and another at the other end. Three or four usually started in each heat, of which there were three for each race, and then there was a final between the winners. Starting from one chair, they had to go round each a certain number of times, frequently upsetting themselves and chairs, and anything else within reach. Although indoors, there was plenty of room for excellent racing, which seldom failed to produce the greatest amusement. The tugs of war were between English and Scotch sailors, Great Britain against the world, or six men from one ship against six from another. For many months these tugs of war aroused the greatest interest, being frequently watched by crowds of sailors generally in a very excited condition. Before the writer left San Francisco, however, a most serious problem had presented itself, as the floor had got so slippery from frequent pulling and races, etc., that the opposing sides could not get a firm grip with their feet. Whether the difficulty has been overcome or not has not been reported. Sawdust and other things had been tried on the floor, but it did not obviate it. No doubt, however, the wisdom of the nineteenth century will be able to

suggest some remedy which will restore the floor to its former excellence.

The most exciting tug of war which was ever witnessed in the Institute occurred one evening some time ago. On that particular evening seven British ships were down to pull against one another; but shortly after the races, which always formed the first part of the programme, had commenced, the second officer and several very large sailors who had just arrived from New York in an American ship, having heard what was going on, came in and asked to be allowed to pull, which request was very willingly granted. It was observed that they were very powerful men, but no one in the room—and there were some 250 sailors present—was prepared to see them pull the seven British crews with comparative ease, one after the other, over the line. It created a feeling of unhappiness and despondency amongst a large number of the audience. It was as if a wet blanket had suddenly been let down on everybody.

On the defeat of the seventh and last British ship becoming an accomplished fact, the leader of the American team announced that the desire of his men and himself was to pull any six men chosen from the crowd

of sailors present. It was an established rule, when ships were pulling against each other for several weeks in succession, that the winner, if *facile princeps* over all others of one week, should not pull the next, so as to give other ships a chance. On this particular evening a team from the large four-masted ship — was present, but were not pulling, owing to having won the previous week's contest. Their six men were composed of two enormous Englishmen, two equally large Russian Finns, and two very powerful Scandinavians. On being asked if they would care to tackle this all-conquering crew from the American ship, they very willingly assented. On informing the leader of the American team that a ship's crew had agreed to pull them instead of a picked six from the whole room, he and his men were seen to vanish downstairs, and remained invisible for ten minutes. A great silence fell over the onlookers as the rival crews took up their places; it was that kind of silence which people tell us can be felt. These tugs of war were always decided by the best of three pulls. Captain — gave the signal to start, and twice in succession did the crew from the British ship pull the American contingent over

the line. Then ensued one of those revulsions of feeling when an expected disaster becomes an unexpected triumph; for upwards of five minutes the room rang with rapturous applause, again and again renewed.

No ill-feeling was manifested in these contests, but it often raised a spirit of healthy rivalry, such as all manly sports will engender, doing not harm, but good.

In addition to these regular weekly entertainments, at times special evenings were arranged, and every now and then crews of ships would give an entertainment, generally consisting of a farce and some songs, or a minstrel entertainment. A number of these sailor evenings were capitally managed, not a few of those taking part showing very real talent, and keeping the audiences thoroughly interested, and frequently intensely amused.

During Christmas week, festivities took place which were very greatly appreciated by sailors and apprentices. Every effort was made to make those so far from home feel that even in a distant port there were many who were only too anxious to show them hospitality. On Christmas Day there was service in the morning, and a good many always came up, and from their hearty sing-

ing were clearly glad to hear once more the grand old Christmas hymns. In the afternoon sports were held and football, which usually took place on the drill-ground of the United States troops, permission always being kindly given by the General in command of the station. Then in the evening a meal was given at the Institute, to which 200 to 300 always turned up.

Another night in the week a very excellent dinner, given by the ladies and gentlemen of San Francisco, was provided. More than 300 from the ships in port always sat down. Ladies from the city did the waiting, a band on the platform discoursed sweet music, and good-fellowship and happiness prevailed on every hand. After dinner, pipes and cigars were lit, volumes of smoke rising simultaneously from the hundreds seated round the tables, and a concert was held. It was often difficult for the ladies to sing owing to the smoke, but they gladly went through with it, and were more than recompensed by the inspiring scene around, and the thundering applause which greeted every song; then great rolling choruses were sung, speeches were made (but not very long ones), loud cheers were given for the President, whilst

'God save the Queen' was always sung with great gusto. Needless to say, the ladies and all those who helped were not forgotten in the general cheering which closed this and most other evenings.

On New Year's Eve another capital evening was always spent, and never failed to be largely attended. About 10.30 p.m. light refreshments were handed round, and an invitation was given to those present to remain for the midnight service. The streets of San Francisco are a perfect babel of noise on New Year's Eve, and, as elsewhere, thousands parade about the city. The writer must say that whenever the invitation to remain to a midnight service was given, he always felt, from the noise and excitement outside, and the well-known attractions of a kind which exist everywhere on this particular evening, that few sailors would remain. However, on each of the five New Years' Eves he spent in San Francisco, there were seldom less than 200 sailors, and once or twice more than that number, who remained for the midnight service. It was something, indeed, each year to witness that congregation of men and boys from the merchant ships, sober, reverent, and attentive, passing the last few

minutes of the old year at a solemn service, instead of joining the noisy crowd outside. It is something to reflect upon, when we consider that they were strangers in a strange city, in the midst of temptation, the power of which people who have their homes and friends always with them can in no way understand. It might have been supposed that many might have made a slip on that night, and no doubt a number did, but we can with confidence say that a very large number *did not*, simply from the fact that they had frequently seen the exemplification of the Christian principle that hospitality should be shown to strangers, and they responded accordingly, as most men and boys will, if they are fairly, honestly, and justly treated.

It may be worth mentioning that few entertainments in the Seamen's Institute were closed without a short and earnest address to those present on the great temptations to which they were particularly accessible from their position as strangers and unknown in a city so far from home, and words of warning and advice were given with no uncertain sound. We are convinced that these words, spoken to men and boys at

the close of evenings which they often so thoroughly enjoyed, were not spoken in vain.

Moreover, although the morning service on Sunday was not well attended, the evening service was always very fairly attended; quite as many coming, in proportion to the number of sailors in port, as do to a church in a town or country parish, and no more serious or attentive congregation could be gathered together than one composed of merchant seamen. Every now and then, when the hire of a boat could be afforded, service was held on the ships in the bay, previous to their sailing from the port and not unfrequently on ships when 'laid up.'

In addition to what regularly went on within the walls of the Institute, there were special days on which efforts were made to gather sailors together. These days were great American holidays, such as Washington's Birthday, Decoration Day, the Fourth of July, and other days on which a number of ships usually gave their crews a holiday. This means that numbers of those from the ships would be loose in San Francisco all day, which often meant little good to them. So on these days, and also on Easter Monday and the Queen's Birthday, picnics in the

country were arranged. On one or two occasions the day was rather wet, although the event took place and the nature of the weather did not seem to damp the spirits of those present, but, as was to be expected in California, the other days were all gloriously fine. Many picnics were held, and it can confidently be stated that those who were present will not forget them. It was impossible not to enjoy them.

In 1897, for instance, picnics were held every month from February to September inclusive. On each occasion the weather was perfect and from 100 to 250 sailors from the ships were with us each time, in addition to a number of ladies, who worked indefatigably for their pleasure. With perfect weather, with scores of young fellows in the heyday of health, the breath of the sea still clinging to them in all its freshness and buoyancy, with ample provision for the inner man, and sports and games of all kinds, it is perhaps little wonder that they were days of rare enjoyment. No people, surely, can enjoy times such as these more thoroughly than men who have been cooped up in the narrow limits of a ship. A number of captains now and then came, and seemed to enjoy the

whole affair quite as much as those under them, and it was always very much appreciated by those who arranged these days when the captains of ships came themselves, and moreover, their sailors like to see them as well.

Not only were picnics in the country frequently indulged in, but as often as could be arranged cricket and football matches were played against local teams in San Francisco, Oakland, and Alameda. Every now and then some excellent cricketer and football player was found on the ships, and though the sailors were more frequently beaten than victorious, still a number of excellent games were played. It must be borne in mind that sailors, especially on long-voyage ships, stand at a great disadvantage in these games, from the impossibility of getting proper practice, but they often acquitted themselves exceedingly well, especially in football, winning several matches against good teams, and playing many a good game.

On the Jubilee Day of Queen Victoria's long reign there were a large number of ships 'laid up' in San Francisco Bay, and although most of the men had either deserted or been paid off, which has been referred to pre-

viously, yet there were still a few on board, in addition to the officers and apprentices. It was, of course, a great holiday amongst the British people in the city, and arrangements had been made for a celebration which would occupy the greater part of the day.

A number of sailors took part in the various items of the programme, and as regards affording amusement to several thousand spectators, they succeeded admirably, and went through what they had to do in an excellent manner. Some 500 from the British ships in port had a holiday, and all were given pocket-money. It might be supposed by many that 500 strange sailors, mostly young men, loose all day on a great national occasion in a city of much temptation, would have been tempted to drink the Queen's health a great many more times than was good for them. But it was not so, and the following little story of the close of the day is worth recording.

It had been arranged that there should be in the Seamen's Institute at 6.30 p.m. ample provision for any who might come, and to have a concert afterwards at which the patriotic and national songs of England should

be sung. It was confidently predicted by those who thought they knew, that the hope of getting sailors to the Institute to spend the evening after being free in the city all day, and moreover having money to spend, would prove to be a vain one. However, relying upon many experiences of the past, and knowing the great goodwill entertained to the work of the Institute by all who were in port at the time, those in charge felt sure a large number would be there, and prepared accordingly.

By 6.30 some 400 sailors and apprentices and a number of officers were in the place, and it is a fact well worthy of mention that out of that great throng of sailors who came up in the evening, after being at liberty all day, not one was seen in any way the worse for drink. This means a great deal, especially as the great majority of all those from every ship in port except two were present in the building. These two ships would have been likewise fully represented, only the poor fellows on board were not given a holiday, very greatly to their disappointment. The spirit of patriotism and loyalty were well exemplified that evening, and the enthusiasm and manner in which all

the well-known English national songs were sung was truly inspiring. At the close it was suggested that the British merchant seamen present should send a message of congratulation to the Queen, which was done amidst great cheering, the telegram being paid for on the spot by the sailors present, a capital finish to the day.

It may be mentioned that when the message was suggested, an old American sailor stood up, and, holding up 10 cents (5d.) in his hand, said he'd sailed in Queen Victoria's ships for years, and he appreciated her, and would give 10 cents for a telegram to her any day.

It being brought to the notice of the audience that the first subscription to the telegram had been given by an American, he was given three ringing cheers.

An instance of what sort of material a real old 'shell-back' is composed of may be given. Although a perfectly sober crowd of sailors occupied the Institute from 6.30 to 10 p.m., yet at that hour, three sailors off the ship —, in an inebriated condition, appeared in the hall. It has never been explained how they managed to mount the two flights of stairs, but the fact remains that they arrived

in safety at the top, and stood surveying the scene, no doubt with mingled feelings. The audience dispersed about 10.30 p.m., and no particular thought was given to the intoxicated trio. The writer and a number of sailors were standing at the foot of the first flight of stairs, when it appeared that the happy three had gradually made up their minds that it was all over, and decided to effect a descent. Partly supporting one another, and partly leaning on the banister, they started on their journey. All went well till they were half-way down, when one of them, an old man who was more than sixty years of age, overbalanced himself, and fell right on the top of his head on to the landing. His neck seemed to go crack underneath him, and he lay senseless. Naturally, those who saw it were horrified, feeling sure that his neck was broken. A doctor, fortunately, was present, who examined him, and said his neck was not broken, but he thought his skull was fractured. As speedily as possible an ambulance was brought, and he was taken in an insensible condition to the hospital.

Early in the morning the writer went to the hospital to find out whether the old man

was alive, dreading to find that he had died during the night ; but to his great relief he was informed that he was 'out and about.' That same afternoon, within sixteen hours of apparently breaking his neck, he was again seen by the writer in an inebriated condition ! His narrow escape from death, so far as human judgment could discern, had made him neither a sadder nor a wiser man.

With very few exceptions, the ships along the wharves were regularly and frequently visited, and the acquaintance of those on board made. The great majority of sailors and apprentices met those who came from the Seamen's Institute in a most friendly and cordial manner ; but there was always a number, as could only be expected, who held aloof, partly from prejudice or religious differences, or from a dread of being 'preached at' ; but, still, a very much larger proportion of those on board the ships came to the Seamen's Institute than do people living in a parish on shore, if we compare the numbers of those who take no interest whatever in the work of the Church with those who do.

In addition to the ships, the hospital where

deep-water sailors were sent when sick or injured was regularly and frequently visited. In former years practically all sailors were sent to the Marine Hospital. This hospital is situated four miles from the shipping. The roads until recently were exceedingly bad, and many a man had his sufferings greatly aggravated by jolting and bumping over four miles of rough road. Three years ago, however, an arrangement was effected by which nearly all the men from British ships were sent to St. Mary's Hospital, situated close to the wharves, and so were saved the long and sometimes terrible drive.

It is no unpleasant duty visiting sailors lying in a strange land sick or hurt ; in fact, there is probably no more pleasant part of a clergyman's duty, though sad enough at times. A sailor makes a very good patient, and the writer is sure that none will testify more readily to that statement than the kind and excellent sisters who care for them in St. Mary's Hospital. It is something to be allowed to bring a smile to the face of some poor fellow lying thousands of miles from all he loves, and to cheer and comfort him ; and it is something, also, if he never rises from his bed of sickness, to follow him, with a few

of his sturdy, healthy shipmates, to his lonely grave away out on the hills overlooking the Golden Gate, with the ships passing to and fro beneath him. Many a sailor lies there who little thought, as his noble ship sailed proudly into San Francisco Bay, how soon he would have passed within the veil.

It is a solemn thing to stand on that rough and unkept spot where the sailors are buried, surrounded sometimes by a large crowd of sailors, apprentices, and captains, and at other times by only one or two, and there read the Burial Service of the Church of England over some fine young fellow cut off at the outset of life struck down by a terrible accident or sudden illness. Standing around, solemn and sad, and often with great and visible emotion, are those who have been shipmates with the one who is gone—who have shared the hardships and toil of the long voyage, been with him out on the yard-arms on wild winter nights off the Horn, have been cheered by his warm and manly spirit; and now he is gone, suddenly, unexpectedly, and for ever. Presently the ship will be passing out of the Golden Gate again, and the sailors will cast up their eyes to the steep and lonely hillside, and say, 'There lies poor ——.' Yes, there

he lies, and many another ; but we do not doubt that, though they will never again sail through the Golden Gate of California, yet they have crossed another threshold, and do behold the King in His beauty, and the land that is very far off.

CHAPTER XIV.

SICKNESS AT SEA.

WHILST mentioning sailors in hospital on shore, we may also mention the sufferings of sick and injured sailors at sea. Consider the case of men falling from aloft, injuring themselves in a terrible manner, or those who become ill with some obscure disease which only skilled medical men can treat properly. Where is proper skill to be obtained, or proper treatment? We know well when a sudden illness comes upon us on shore with what haste the doctor is sent for, with what anxiety he is awaited, and what relief his arrival gives to all the house. We know the tender care which is generally bestowed on sick ones at home, the kind and loving hands of mother, wife, sister, or nurse, doing all that can be done to lessen the suffering of the patient; the perfect quiet which is kept in the house,

the carefully-prepared and proper kind of food, and all else that helps to lessen suffering in many a home on shore. But at sea ! Off Cape Horn, out in the wide Pacific, where is the doctor ? Thousands of miles away ! Where is the peace and quiet so necessary in serious illness ? There may be quiet, but as likely as not there may be the momentary crashing of the ship into mighty waves, throwing her about like a cork, with the water swishing and rushing along the decks ; the creaking and straining of the vessel, and the wind whistling through the rigging, mingled likely enough with hoarse words of command ; and the sailors singing and shouting as they haul on some ropes or try to take in sail.

If there is no peace or quiet to the healthy in bad weather, what must it be to the sick ? No woman's tender hand will in all probability ever soothe that feverish head, no real skill or proper treatment in difficult cases can be given. Without doubt large numbers of captains do all that can be done ; but their knowledge can only be limited, and on certain ships sick men are certainly treated very scantily indeed. No words can describe the sufferings of those who get ill or are injured on these long-voyage ships, and with the

suffering there is the additional mental trouble that no qualified doctor can be obtained, and not infrequently proper food and stimulant is hard to obtain. Many a wistful thought has gone from some dying boy or sailor as he lay in his bunk, knocked about on the waste of waters, slowly and painfully breathing out his life, to some quiet home in peaceful old England, which he knows too well he has lost sight of for ever.

The captain of a large four-masted ship told the writer that, a week or two after he left a certain port, small-pox broke out on his ship, and within a short time thirty out of the thirty-two men and boys on board the ship were down with small-pox, and being a sailing-ship they had to, and did, man and work the ship. Imagine, you who live in luxury and comfort on shore, *what* this means!

Another large sailing ship last year left a certain port in South America, and soon after she sailed fever broke out on board, and in a short time fourteen of the crew of twenty-eight men and boys on board the ship lay dead.

A captain of a large ship regularly trading to San Francisco told the writer that soon after leaving port, after lying for some time alongside a wharf notorious for the amount

of sewage discharged near it, typhoid fever broke out amongst his sailors, and in a short time ten out of a total of sixteen or eighteen men before the mast were down with it, several being delirious at the same time.

These are only odd cases, but what could be told of the ships that trade to Santos and other yellow-fever ports! Consider the cases given of those three ships. The absence of proper skill and nursing; the terrible loneliness and despair of the situation, with many men sick, and others catching the infection, and around them the boundless ocean. Delightful, no doubt, it is to read and talk about the ocean and the water dancing in the sunlight, and the roving, free life of a sailor. These things are all very well on a luxurious pleasure-yacht or a 10,000-ton liner, though it is hard enough on these many a time; but what beauty is there in the ocean, what freedom in the lives of those on board a fever-stricken sailing-ship, with no prospect of getting assistance possibly for two months or more?

In connection with accidents of various kinds at sea, it may be mentioned what an admirable work the Missions to Seamen Society are doing at a number of their In-

stitutes round the coast of England. Certain doctors in London, Liverpool, Sunderland, Shields, and a number of other ports, from the pure love of humanity, and without remuneration for the loss to them of valuable time, come down week by week to the various Seamen's Institutes, and there give most practical lectures on the work of the St. John's Ambulance Association to classes composed of officers, apprentices, and seamen, teaching them how to render aid to the injured. A very considerable and increasing number of men who go to sea have, through these lectures, gained the certificate of the St. John's Ambulance work. This means now that on many ships there will soon be found men who understand, at any rate, how to render some practical aid, and give some alleviation of pain to the injured, which will be not only a great benefit in itself, but also a great assistance to a captain, who may be the only man on board who has even rudimentary knowledge on such matters. It is well for people on shore to understand that only passenger-boats carry a doctor, and that the rank and file of the merchant service have in illness and accident to depend upon themselves, and not upon professional skill.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

WHAT, it may be asked, were the results of such a mission-work as we have attempted to describe? Had it any restraining effect on any seamen or apprentices in a port of such temptation as San Francisco?

With regard to apprentices, we can give the following very satisfactory statistics: Previous to the opening of the Seamen's Institute, and the work in connection therewith, apprentices used to desert their ships at the rate of some sixty a year, with results to themselves which have been more or less touched upon. During the five years subsequent to the work being started, desertions amongst these young men dropped to an average of about twelve a year, and it is a significant fact that this decrease began the *very month* the Institute was opened. In the

preceding four or five months some thirty apprentices deserted, and then there was a sudden halt. Why? Some persons maintain that the things which previously tempted apprentices to desert—good work and wages, etc., on shore—were no longer present; but the fact remains that, in the months preceding the commencement of the Institute, times were as bad as they have ever been in California—work was slack and wages low, business was at a low ebb, and ships were ‘laid up’ all over the bay—and *yet* they deserted. The real reason of the decrease of desertions was, simply and solely, that a healthy and attractive alternative to the streets and their temptations was provided, of which frequently very large numbers took full advantage, and that a vigorous campaign was conducted amongst them, pointing out the dangers with which they were surrounded, and warning them in no uncertain manner of what would probably befall them if they left their ships. These, and no other, were the causes that made for the decrease in the numbers of deserting apprentices.

A number of apprentices who did desert during these past five years were found by those at the Institute—some of them in the

most extraordinary places—and persuaded to rejoin their ships; and not a few have told the writer, before they sailed from the port, that had it not been for the Institute, and the good influence that went out therefrom, they would inevitably have deserted.

Then, as regards seamen, what must we say of the great audiences which so frequently assembled within the walls of the Institute, consisting of well-dressed, respectable men? Was it not proved to them on scores of occasions that they could enjoy themselves and laugh as heartily as in any public music-hall or salon? Did it not appeal to numbers of them that enjoyment could be found there without the sting of temptation? Of course it did, and many a man and boy has left San Francisco as healthy, as sturdy, and as respectable, as when he entered the port, who, had there been no place or work of this kind, might have been debauched, and perhaps ruined, by the low places and company into which he would very likely have fallen. Is it not a proof of no small influence gained over men when, as happened last year, a number of seamen, paid off from British ships in San Francisco, walked past saloons, crimps, and dance-halls, and placed in the writer's

hands £1,300 in hard cash for transmission to their friends at home or for safe keeping?

In connection with these sailors bringing their money to the writer for safe keeping, a very touching incident occurred, which, if it does not 'point a moral,' yet 'adorns a tale.'

A young seaman belonging to North Wales was paid off from the ship —, and brought about £20 to the Seamer's Institute to be kept for him. He spent a month on shore trying to get a berth on some other vessel, during which time he boarded at the Sailor's Home. Every day he used to come down to the Institute, and passed much of his time there. No one who knew him could fail to become attached to him. He bore an excellent character from the ship, not only from the officers, but also his shipmates in the fo'c's'le, who declared he was one of the best fellows who ever set foot on board a ship. This character he more than maintained during the month he spent on shore in the midst of many temptations, and with the means at his disposal, if he had so wished, of having a so-called 'good time.' But he resisted the many allurements around, and it may with certainty be said that he spent that month soberly, righteously, and in the fear of God.

To his lasting credit may that be said, for it is not easy for a sailor paid off in San Francisco, far from his home, practically a stranger, to live as he did.

After being on shore a month, he managed to get a berth on the ship —, which was going up north in ballast to load for home, and he came to the writer and asked him to send the balance of his money—about £16—to his father. This was done, and a note was also sent, telling the father that he ought to be proud of his son, as he was an excellent fellow.

On board the ship he found amongst the crew one of his relations, a middle-aged man, much addicted to drink. The same evening that he joined the ship, he brought him to the writer, and asked him to speak to him and advise him to live a steady life. A conversation ensued which clearly gave great pleasure to the young man, and then he took his charge away, and they went on board the ship.

The next afternoon about 4 p.m. the writer was walking along the wharves and stopped to look at the ship as she lay at anchor in the stream, half a mile from the shore, when suddenly the flag was hauled up half-mast.

The meaning was clear, someone was dead ; but who was it ? The answer soon came, for not long afterwards a boat put off from the ship and was pulled ashore, and carefully and reverently the body of this excellent young seaman was lifted out of the boat and carried up the wharf. No help was needed, no medical aid was called, for life was extinct, and his kind and gentle eyes were glazed in death.

He had been working up aloft out on a yard-arm, when something smashed ; he was hurled headlong to the deck and his back was broken.

‘ Whom the gods love die young.’

The morning but one after this painful affair he was buried. On the rough hillside near the Cliff House overlooking the Golden Gate, the place where most seamen from British ships find their last resting-place, there might have been seen a gathering of some thirty or forty Welsh sailors, including several captains, assembled to see their young countryman laid beneath the sod. It was a wild and wet morning about 8.30 a.m., and a truly touching scene it was as the solemn words of the Burial Service were read over

him who had been so suddenly taken away. Especially sad was it to witness the great emotion of the old sailor, his relation. One thought must ever remain with him, perhaps to his great benefit, that the last act of this young man's life on earth was to try and do him good.

A few hours later the ship passed out through the Golden Gate, away into the waters of the wide Pacific, and we can well believe that every eye glanced up to the hill-side where the young man lay, and every mind had a thought for him whose spirit had winged its way on another voyage, a long voyage, with an innumerable company of angels as companions, and vast numbers of those who, like our brave sailor, had 'fought a good fight and kept the faith.'

It is not much use multiplying proofs, but when leading merchants and gentlemen in San Francisco are able to testify, as they willingly would do if necessary, to the excellence of the work in connection with the Institute, not from what they have heard, but from what they have witnessed, it is not necessary to dilate on the subject further.

Across the bay, three or four miles distant from San Francisco, is the town of Oakland,

and discharging at the wharf there are generally to be found two or three ships. For several years a number of ladies and gentlemen from Oakland and the neighbourhood have taken a deep interest in the welfare of those on the ships. They have regularly visited the ships, held services on board, kept a room open for the sailors in the town, for services, entertainments, and many other purposes, and in addition have opened their houses to these stranger boys and men, with the result that hundreds have spent a most pleasant time on shore, amidst good surroundings and nice companions, simply through the true kindness of these excellent people, who put not into words but into deeds the precept of St. Paul to 'show hospitality to strangers.'

It is pleasant to recollect how consistently cordial were the relations that existed between those at the Institute in San Francisco and the workers across the bay. There was a mutual understanding, and in every possible way they assisted one another in social evenings, entertainments and picnics.

The writer can confidently state that had not the two parties mentioned worked in cordial unison, most serious harm would have

been done to the whole work. Quarrelling amongst so-called religious people working amongst sailors always has a very baneful effect upon the crews of ships, who are very quick to observe these things.

We may look at it how we may, we may hear enemies and backbiters sneer, and maligners lift up their voices, as they do frequently in every possible way, but those who look right down into the bedrock of the work and who patiently observe for themselves, can only say one thing, and that is, 'It is a work well worthy of all the help that can be given—good, healthy, manly, truly Christian.'

We have partly described what goes on in only one port; but when we mention Cape Town, Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yokohama, in addition to all the ports around the English coast, where there is work carried on by the Missions to Seamen's Society, people can have some idea of the magnitude of the operations of the Society, of the boundless influence for good which *must* pass from those places to hundreds of sailors who spend their lives upon the trackless ocean, and who know more of hard knocks, poor food, cold, and hardships, and

less of home comforts, peace, and quietness than any other class of men in the world.

Here is an object worthy of help from some of the wealthy members of a community which depends for its very life upon the sea ; whose comforts, luxury, and food depend solely upon the labours of the sailor. To mention San Francisco once more, it was often hardly possible to get the few hundred pounds necessary to maintain a work which continually benefited numbers of our own countrymen in a city where for years there has been the most dire need for such a work as has been started. Far away England rolls in wealth and luxury, made possible only by the labours of these very men ! for in truth it may be said of Great Britain, as it was spoken by the Psalmist of old in reference to the earth : ' He hath founded it upon the seas and prepared it upon the floods.'

The spirit of the sea is not dead or dying in England. Probably five or six out of every ten boys at one time or another in their early lives wish to go to sea. The First Lord of the Admiralty stated in Parliament that last year 5,000 boys were wanted for the Royal Navy, and 40,000 presented

themselves. Surely this does not look like any diminution of the love of the sea. Would not thousands of those boys have been willing to be trained for the merchant service? Without doubt they would, but unfortunately little or no encouragement is given them to do so, and the conditions under which seamen live on many ships are so bad that the life offers no inducement.

It is easy for some to run down British sailors, call them a drunken lot, always making trouble, insubordinate, and profligate—statements which, by the way, are by no means correct—but before any class of men can be saluted with epithets such as these, we had better find out whether they are the subjects of fair play, honesty, and justice, or of poor food, insidious robbery through commission, and other means of oppression related in these pages.

When men are fairly and honestly fed and treated, they will often show a side to their character of willing obedience and contentment, which is never even so much as suspected by those who do not treat them fairly.

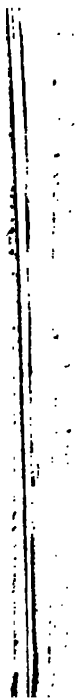
British seamen will *not* show the best side of their character when they are oppressed,

but the worst. We cannot be altogether surprised at this, as what is often called 'making trouble' on board a ship is merely refusing to endure in silence a grievous wrong.

Discipline, and strict discipline, must be maintained, and it is very much more easily enforced when men are living and working under good and fair conditions of life than the opposite.

Not only for the comfort of the men themselves, but also for the welfare of the British nation, must it be fervently hoped that the conditions under which merchant seamen live on board ships may be so improved that men and boys of the British race may once more be found manning their own country's ships, doing their work contentedly and industriously, feeling that they are following a calling, hard at times though it be, which yet offers as many inducements in earning a livelihood as are presented to those who work on shore.

THE END.



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